The Council of Canadians believes that political literacy is crucial to regaining control of our communities and our country. We encourage you to copy articles from Canadian Perspectives – most conveniently fit on one or two pages. If you would like to reprint articles, or if you would like to distribute Canadian Perspectives in your community, please contact us at 1-800-387-7177.
**Letters to the Editor**

(Re. Toilet paper ballot, Letter to the Editor, Autumn 2015)

Dear Nicolaas and Maki,

There is hope for your vote! There is a system that is simple, representative and proportional. It will allow our elected MPs to be truly representative of our local wishes and at the same time allow the votes in the House of Commons to be truly representative of our nationwide wishes.

This system comes from Stephen Johnson, a retired chemist from England, and it uses our current ridings with the first-past-the-post system of electing our local MP. Thus, it is directly representative.

It is also directly proportional because the number of House of Commons votes a political party has would be connected directly to the number of votes (as a percentage of the total electoral vote) the party received nationwide. Thus, the number of House of Commons votes would not be dependent on the number of elected MPs, as it is with our current system. Each MP would have a portion of a vote, and the party would decide who stands up to announce their votes.

**Norm Hart**
Sydenham, Ontario

**A positive conference**

Early in 2015, in the months leading up the 2015 Canadian election, I found myself responding to the messages – and energy – emanating from the Council of Canadians, which I followed on Facebook. I knew the federal election would, one way or another, establish a milestone for Canada. And that milestone could be a millstone if the government was re-elected.

It was clearly a time for change. If the government was re-elected, I felt this established a new benchmark in Canadian tolerance – and I don’t mean that as a good thing.

These views, and my attraction to what I was seeing of the Council of Canadians, took me to the Council’s annual conference in Windsor, Ontario last October. I was delighted to see there was sincerity and substance behind the Council’s media messages. It was a bit of a jolt to meet people who believed what they said and practised what they preached.

As I headed out to the airport and winged my way back to Ottawa at the end of the conference I felt that I now had a better appreciation of what not only the Council of Canadians faces, but also our country, our government, and our multi-lateral relationships. I was humbled by the complexities I witnessed in areas ranging from international trade law, to urban poverty, to the evils of bottled water. But then, I thought, if there are enough people who can see both the big pictures and the little ones, we just might get ahead of what is now beguiling us.

**David Jones**
Ottawa, Ontario

**Swamps are precious too**

After reading the article in the Autumn 2015 issue “Artist Donates Works to Raise Awareness about Fracking Water Withdrawals,” I had to write to voice my concerns about the statement “Alberta is full of stinking swamps – why not take water from there?” Alberta swamps are full of life forms and are home to many different creatures and should not be drained for fracking.

I do applaud Mr. Mills for donating his works of art and for his efforts to raise awareness about companies taking fresh water from rivers for fracking. I hope he keeps up this work. In my opinion banning fracking is the only sustainable and responsible way to protect our future.

**Joe Saysell**
Donalda, Alberta

**Correction**

A photo cutline in the Autumn 2015 issue of Canadian Perspectives indicated that the Nestlé bottling plant in Hope, British Columbia, draws water from the Coquihalla River. In fact, the Nestlé plant draws water from the Kawkawa aquifer, which connects to the Kawkawa watershed. The Kawkawa watershed connects to the Coquihalla River which is a tributary of the Fraser River. We apologize for the error.

**Send us your letters!**

If you have something to say about an article you have read in Canadian Perspectives, or an issue you think would interest our readers, please write to us. We reserve the right to edit your letter for clarity and length. Letters must include your full name, address and phone number.

**Send your letter to:**
Canadian Perspectives
The Council of Canadians
300-251 Bank Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1X3
Email: inquiries@canadians.org
Attention: Editor, Canadian Perspectives

The Council of Canadians joined with public health care advocates from across the country in Vancouver in January to lobby for a new health care accord.
Dear friends,

Well, months into the Trudeau government’s term, things are certainly different – and better! We are all deeply glad to be rid of the Harper government and the feeling of being under constant siege for our activism.

I am happy to report that the Trudeau government has kept many promises. It has launched a process to deal with the historical government has kept many promises. It has I am happy to report that the Trudeau government has kept many promises. It has launched a process to deal with the historic-ernment has kept many promises. It has

ic abuse of First Nations; it has welcomed Syrian refugees and ended discrimination in health care for refugees; it has engaged in a more healthy relationship with the provinces in dealing with health care and the environment; it has brought back the long-form census; it ended the bombing mission in Syria; it has ended the war on unions, charities and civil society. For all of this and more, we are supportive.

However, the Trudeau government has adopted one huge plank of the Harper Conservatives – its unquestioning support of free trade. Prime Minister Trudeau and Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland are strongly promoting the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). They also seem poised to support the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), after holding what can only be described as limited and unenthusiastic “public hearings” into this deal. They are also promoting new free trade deals with India and China, selling them all as good for the middle class, contrary to all evidence that free trade means fewer jobs in our country.

The Council of Canadians has been on the front line fighting these unfair trade deals. It is important to note that these agreements are not really about reducing tariffs on each country’s products, but about challenging non-tariff barriers that get in the way of corporate profits.

These barriers include standards and regulations that protect workers, social services and the environment. Transnational investors do not want to bump into higher standards as they cross borders. Built into these new deals is “regulatory cooperation” to harmonize – downward – standards on food safety, chemicals, financial rules, and many others. The deals also promote opening up new sectors such as health care and education to privatization and foreign investment and limit the right of local governments to use public money to promote local businesses and jobs.

Perhaps most egregiously, the deals include investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions similar to NAFTA’s Chapter 11 that allow foreign corporations to sue governments for introducing new rules or practices that hurt the corporations’ “right to profit.” Canada is currently facing almost $3 billion in challenges from American corporations, most of which have to do with environmental standards. Giving this same right to sue to the corporations of Europe and the 11 other countries of the TPP will increase the likelihood of corporate challenges to our laws and democracy and act as a “chill” when governments think about introducing new laws.

I have been deeply involved in the CETA struggle, travelling with other Council colleagues to 10 European countries to build and support CETA opposition. CETA and its EU-U.S. counterpart, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, are deeply unpopular in Europe. It is possible we can stop them there.

As Canadians learn about the TPP and the threat to Canadian jobs, especially in the auto sector, they are becoming very concerned. As we did with CETA, the Council of Canadians is planning to hold public hearings in the fall on the TPP with our allies in labour to bring the details of this agreement to communities across the country.

Back in the 1980s, Canadians had a passionate debate about free trade when Canada and the U.S. were negotiating the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Then, in the mid-1990s, Canadians became passionate about another agreement, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which we defeated. It is time for a new generation of Canadians to become knowledgeable about these new trade deals – like CETA and the TPP – and for us to have a real and honest look at what they really mean.

The Council of Canadians is not opposed to trade – or even trade agreements – as long as they respect the right of a people to trade – or even trade agreements – as long as they respect the right of a people to establish their own social and environmental standards. CETA and the TPP are far from that model and it is up to us to get this message out.

With hope and resolve,

Maude Barlow

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.
The Trans-Pacific Partnership **Erodes Public Policy** to Benefit the World’s Rich and Powerful

If you’re running for election these days, it’s all the rage to talk about income inequality – from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s pledged tax hikes on the richest one per cent, to U.S. presidential hopefuls Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton wanting the rich to pay their fair share, to U.K. Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn’s admiration of Karl Marx.

It’s not just politicians talking. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund are saying it too. There have even been articles in *Italian Vogue* magazine about Thomas Piketty, economist and income inequality guru.

Oxfam notes that the world’s richest 62 people, most living in the U.S., own as much wealth as half of the population.

In January, in his State of the Union address, U.S. President Barack Obama made a passionate plea for the 99 per cent, saying that, “After years now of record corporate profits, working families won’t get more opportunity or bigger paychecks just by letting big banks or big oil or hedge funds make their own rules at everybody else’s expense.”

He also argued that globalization was eroding workers’ rights and concentrating economic benefits at the top, and that it is now harder for people to pull themselves out of poverty.

And then, in the same breath, he flogged the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade deal between Canada, the United States, Mexico and nine other countries – together representing more than 40 per cent of the global economy.

“Approve this agreement. Give us the tools to enforce it. It’s the right thing to do,” said President Obama.

Come again?

The very globalization that is hindering Obama’s beloved Main Street while bolstering Wall Street is reinforced by trade agreements such as the TPP.

A study by Tufts University released in January 2016 showed that the TPP is not the economic panacea proclaimed by the free trade gospel movement. Yes, there will be economic growth in countries signing the TPP, but this growth will be negligible. In Canada it is projected to be 0.28 per cent over 10 years.
And the risks are significant. A loss of 58,000 jobs in Canada and greater inequality due to labour’s reduced share of the gains achieved under the agreement will reinforce the very inequality that Obama wants to resolve.

This study is based on the United Nations economic model.

The World Bank, no shirker in backing free trade agreements, uses another model. But its premise, assuming that there is full employment, is wrong. Even with that context, however, the World Bank study still only projects growth of less than one per cent for Canada’s economy by 2030.

But growth is good, right? We’ll all have good jobs and be able to buy things. But growth doesn’t necessarily mean the average Canadian is better off. Many economists are pointing to the phenomenon of economic growth with stagnant job growth. As Graeme Maxton wrote in The Guardian, “In the last 35 years, the world has experienced the fastest economic growth in human history. Yet, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, unemployment went up.”

If we see the economy as a pie, with workers getting a certain portion and corporations another portion, in the four decades before NAFTA workers were getting more of the pie. Since NAFTA, workers have been getting a smaller portion, according to Bruce Campbell of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. In particular, people without college or university education are seeing income declines.

Joseph Stiglitz, the American economist and Nobel laureate, said in the New York Times, “The argument was always that the winners could compensate the losers. But the winners never do. And that becomes particularly relevant when we have a society with as much inequality as we have today.”

There is also the myth that somehow trade deals will “open markets” – that signing a trade agreement means we’ll soon be selling more car parts to Japan and wheat to Malaysia, for example. David Hamilton, an economist in the office of Canadian Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, crunched the numbers. Free trade agreements are numerous, but in some cases, they have exacerbated trade deficits.

Jim Stanford, senior economist with Unifor, writes: “These free trade agreements (FTAs) will have zero immediate impact on key indicators like employment, investment and exports and their long-run impact, likely negative in my view, won’t be dramatic in any event. But signing FTAs is a high-profile symbolic act, which makes the government seem competent and globally engaged, especially when cheered on by the breathless boosterism of most of the media.”

People also believe that trade agreements lower tariffs. But the World Bank says tariffs amongst TPP countries are already low. The goal is to go after non-tariff barriers. These take many forms, but can affect areas such as government procurement, regulations, policies and other supportive measures that a country may institute.

Out of the 30 chapters in the TPP, only two truly focus on tariff elimination, while six deal with traditional trade issues. So, what trade agreements like the TPP are really doing is fixing the rules of international trade. Rules, in themselves, are not bad things, but the TPP is the new corporate rulebook, and if it is signed it will erode our public policy to benefit the world’s powerful rich.

What can we do?
Opposing the TPP can be a daunting task. Forty per cent of the world’s economy is at stake, with some of the biggest economic players and lobbyists working on the deal.

But already, there is much opposition to it all over the world. In Auckland, New Zealand, 1,000 people shut down the downtown core while politicians were signing the deal. In most of the TPP countries people are participating in mass rallies.

In the U.S., both Republicans and Democrats in the Congress and the Senate, including Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan, are against the TPP. Since both of the Democratic candidates, as well as one of the Republican candidates have come out against it, there is great hope that the deal will not make it through the U.S. Congress.

But there is so much to do in Canada. Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland said the Liberals will consult with Canadians about the TPP. So far this has amounted to accepting emailed comments and holding a handful of forums that have not been well advertised. This is not good enough. There needs to be a comprehensive consultation, one that would provide much-needed independent analysis of the deal from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, would engage First Nations, provinces, municipalities and civil society, and would take into account environmental, human rights and labour concerns.

Council of Canadians chapter activists are meeting with MPs to discuss concerns about the deal. The Council’s Trade Justice Working Group is preparing presentations, activities and actions that will help raise awareness across the country. Many Council chapters will host whistleblower Dr. Shiv Chopra, who will talk about how the TPP will allow milk from cows that have been given bovine growth hormone into Canada. We are also working with labour, environmental and other allies in Canada and around the world to coordinate information and actions.

Awareness is growing about the TPP’s wide-ranging impacts. We can – and will – stop the TPP.

Sujata Dey is the Trade Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Trade Deals Give Corporations the Power to Sue

The Trans-Pacific Partnership contains the controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provision.

In short, ISDS gives corporations the power to sue national governments for lost future profits related to public interest legislation, most commonly related to the protection of the environment. This provision is known as Chapter 11 in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It is in the yet-to-be ratified Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and in the recently signed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and it is the subject of debate and reform proposals in the United States-European Union Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The Trudeau government is defending this provision in the TPP. Global Affairs Canada (Prime Minister Trudeau’s department of foreign affairs and international trade) says, “With respect to ISDS, the TPP will not impair the ability of Canada or its partners to regulate and legislate in areas such as the environment, culture, safety, health and conservation. Our experience under NAFTA demonstrates that neither our investment protection rules nor the ISDS mechanism constrain any level of government from regulating in the public interest.”

In fact, Canada’s experience under NAFTA has been the complete opposite of that. Since NAFTA came into force on January 1, 1994, Canada has been subject to 35 NAFTA investor-state claims. Sixty-three per cent of those claims have involved challenges to environmental protection or resource management measures. A notable example includes the Calgary-based Lone Pine Resources’ $250-million Chapter 11 challenge against Canada over Quebec’s moratorium on fracking for oil and gas underneath the St. Lawrence River.

*Toronto Star* columnist Thomas Walkom has cautioned, “Ottawa says the TPP does not remove the right of governments to legislate and regulate in the public interest.’ That’s what was said about NAFTA originally. But those claims proved to be false. With the TPP, as with NAFTA, all will depend on how the final text is worded and how the dispute settlement panels interpret this wording. In the end, the new Trans-Pacific deal is essentially a renegotiated NAFTA with Japan and a couple of cheap-labour countries (Vietnam, Malaysia) thrown in.”

The ISDS provision threatens both climate policy and Indigenous rights.

As Friends of the Earth highlights, “The ISDS mechanism included in the TPP investment chapter grants foreign investors access to a secret tribunal if they believe actions taken by a government will affect their future profits. This provision is a ticking time-bomb for climate policy because many government policies needed to address global warming are subject to suits brought before international investment tribunals. ... Other TPP chapters, like the one covering trade in goods, can be the basis for state-to-state suits challenging climate policies.”

Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow has called for a provision in global climate agreements that would protect government measures reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ISDS challenges. She stated, “The central problem is that many of the same countries pledging to take serious action on climate change are also party to, or are aggressively negotiating, trade and investment deals that contain a mechanism that gives large corporations the right to challenge any changes to the current rules under which they operate.”

United Nations Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Rights Victoria Tauli-Corpuz has warned that “the clause of non-discrimination between a local and an international investor ... grants more rights to transnational firms, often at the expense of indigenous rights.” She says this is a crucial issue because most remaining natural resources are located on Indigenous lands.

In a January 2016 op-ed published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Council of Canadians Regional Organizer Brigette DePape and Winnipeg chapter activist Jobb Arnold wrote “[The ISDS provision] could affect the First Nations on Lelu Island, B.C. ... There, the battle is against Petronas, a company that wants to exploit liquefied natural gas. It’s not just the land and water, but also the fishing economy at stake for future generations. Under the TPP, Petronas, a Malaysian company, could sue the Canadian government if it were to limit LNG exploitation on the island. In this way, the TPP gives multinational corporations more power and grassroots land-defenders less.”

The Trans-Pacific Partnership includes the 12 countries that produce nearly 40 per cent of the monetary value of all the finished goods and services in the world. There is a mixture of countries within it, including G7 “major advanced economies” (the United States, Canada and Japan), G20 “major economies” (Australia and Mexico), relatively smaller economies (New Zealand and Singapore), and “developing economies” (Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Peru and Vietnam).

Giving the transnational corporations that operate in these countries the power to sue government over public interest legislation is the wrong way to go.

Brent Patterson is the Political Director for the Council of Canadians.
Provincial ministers met with Prime Minister Trudeau in Vancouver in March to launch climate talks that will lay the groundwork for Canada to meet its obligations under the global Paris climate agreement.

This meeting was the first step to identifying tough choices that need to be made to ensure we are on a path towards addressing the growing climate change crisis. Right now we are far off, course, with emissions set to rise above the weak climate targets set by the Harper government. Without additional action, fossil fuel emissions will continue to grow and the tar sands will lead the way.

Here are five things we can do for an effective national climate plan:

1. **Freeze fossil fuel expansion** 
   It is abundantly clear that more production, particularly of extreme forms of energy (extreme in their impacts on land, water, climate and communities) like the tar sands, fracking and offshore drilling, must end. We must say no to projects like the Kinder Morgan and Energy East pipelines. Approving the Energy East pipeline could spur an increase of up to 40 per cent in tar sands production and generate more than 30 million tonnes of carbon pollution. Combined with Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain expansion, this could unleash 45.4 million tonnes of carbon pollution annually. This is more than the annual climate pollution of eight provinces and territories.

   We must ensure energy projects include consideration of their upstream and downstream climate impacts in light of Canada’s pledged support to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. While the Trudeau government has promised to include a climate test for pipelines, it also continues to assert that oil needs to get to tidewater where it can be exported to other markets. We need to hold our government to account for an effective and fair climate test and pipeline reviews.

2. **A 100% clean energy economy by 2050** 
   Not only is it entirely possible to have a 100% clean (or green) economy by 2050, it is necessary. This means more renewable energy from solar and wind, wave, geothermal and tidal power. This expansion would be best under public and community (or collective) ownership, ensuring that public benefits are maximized and community input is respected. It means dramatically improving efforts to conserve energy and a universal and accessible program for new energy-efficient buildings and retrofitting homes. We need more affordable and effective public transit that includes high speed rail, better energy and electricity sharing across borders, and an improved electricity grid.

   Any federal infrastructure spending must be used for these opportunities, and not...
to further entrench our fossil fuel economy. In other words, we need money for renewable energy, public transit and retrofits, not more pipelines and highways.

How can all this be financed? Making good on Canada’s promise to eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel industries (which averaged $2.9 billion over 2013 and 2014) would be a good start. The Leap Manifesto, a visioning document for Canada, calls for a progressive carbon tax. There is also military spending that could be redirected. We could increase corporate taxes, establish fines through effective corporate regulation, require higher royalty rates, or create a global financial transaction tax (also known as a Robin Hood tax).

3. Respecting Indigenous communities

Fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) would go a long way towards mending the very broken relationship in this country between settlers and Indigenous communities. While the Trudeau government has recognized the need for improved relationships, questions remain as to whether free, prior and informed consent, as enshrined in UNDRIP, will be respected. First Nation communities are often most impacted by extreme energy projects and are also more likely to suffer from climate change impacts.

4. A just transition and equity measures

Critical to this plan will be the need to support workers and communities affected by the transition from fossil fuels to a clean economy by 2050. Measures like job training and other resources for workers in the coal industry (a sector that should be fully phased out by 2030) are needed to help transition workers into the clean energy economy.

Indigenous and low-income communities should be at the front of the line for building retrofits, which will help lower energy costs. As the Leap Manifesto highlights, “Indigenous peoples should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects. So should communities currently dealing with heavy health impacts of polluting industrial activity.”

5. Climate adaptation in the Global South

The countries that have historically contributed the most to climate change must take responsibility for paying for the adaptation (transitioning off of fossil fuel reliance) and mitigation (dealing with unavoidable climate impacts) costs of the Global South, the areas being hit hardest by the ravages of climate change. As was highlighted in a joint open letter endorsed by 55 Canadian organizations, including the Council of Canadians, Canada’s fair share of the $100 billion USD promised in the Paris climate agreement would require Canada to contribute $4 billion a year until 2020. This figure is based on past precedents where Canada has contributed three to four percent of multilateral funds.

All of these changes must be protected from investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in trade deals that allow foreign corporations to sue governments for financial compensation if governments introduce new laws or practices – be they environmental, health or human rights – that negatively affect corporations’ bottom lines. The Council of Canadians is sharing a new report written by Osgoode Hall Law Professor Gus Van Harten – with a foreword by Maude Barlow – that includes proposed language for an ISDS carve-out that would protect a climate change agreement from the threat of corporate lawsuits.

Time is running out for the change that is needed. Climate scientists say this is the decade when major changes are needed if we are going to save the future of our planet. It is time to leap to a better future for all of us.

Andrea Harden-Donahue is the Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Nestlé Continues to Draw Water – and Ire – from Local Communities

Hope, British Columbia, and Wellington County, Ontario, are becoming battlegrounds for cherished water sources – and Nestlé is, once again, at the centre of the fights.

Nestlé, a multinational corporation headquartered in Switzerland, has made a conditional offer to purchase the Middlebrook well in Elora, Ontario. Nestlé wants to test the water and has applied to the Ontario government for a Permit to Take Water. While this application is for a pumping test and the water cannot be used for bottling, the proposal is part of Nestlé’s larger plan to establish a back-up well to its other wells in Hillsburgh and Aberfoyle in Wellington County. Nestlé’s plan could have significant impacts on local water-sheds and the Great Lakes Basin, as well as Six Nations and Elora residents, whose human right to water is being threatened.

The Council of Canadians’ Centre Wellington Chapter, local groups like Save Our Water and Wellington Water Watchers, and local residents have been taking action and organizing events to draw attention to Nestlé’s plans.

The well sits on the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee, also known as Six Nations. Over 90 per cent of people in Six Nations of the Grand River – more than 11,000 people – do not have clean running water. This is a stark example of water and environmental injustice, where Nestlé has access to pristine well water upstream, which they bottle and sell off for profit, while Six Nations cannot access the same water downstream to drink and live because it is contaminated with agricultural run-off and industrial and human waste.

In 2013, Wellington Water Watchers, Ecojustice and the Council of Canadians celebrated when Nestlé Canada Inc. backed down from a bottled water fight after the groups challenged Nestlé on its attempt to have drought restrictions dropped from its 2012 permit renewal for its Hillsburgh water-takings. Nestlé’s permit for its Aberfoyle water-takings will expire on July 31, 2016.

In B.C., the provincial government will finally begin regulating groundwater under the province’s new Water Sustainability Act. However, there has been a large public backlash about the low rates for water withdrawals, which range from $0.02 to $2.25 per million litres. In particular, Nestlé, a company that sold almost $9.5 billion of water in 2014 worldwide, will pay only $2.25 for every million litres of water it draws from its well in Hope and in Sto:lo Nation – a total of $600 for the entire 265 million litres. More than 225,000 people signed an online petition by SumOfUs.org urging the B.C. government to increase water rates for bulk withdrawals. While the government agreed to review the rates after the petition was delivered, it has since reneged on that commitment.

Communities need to be able to decide whether they want bottled water companies like Nestlé to take water, especially in times of drought. The District of Hope experienced Level 4 drought conditions (extremely dry) last summer. In B.C., the Coquihalla and Fraser rivers, which connect to the Kawkawa aquifer that Nestlé draws water from, both suffered from low water levels last summer.

The Council of Canadians continues to call for water to be recognized as a human right, as a commons, and as a public trust, which would mean that it must first be made available for drinking water and community use.

It’s time to turn off the tap to Nestlé’s bottled water profits.

Emma Lui is the Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
the Council of Canadians has brought people together to make a difference in communities and act for social justice.

The Council’s work is funded almost entirely by generous donations from people like you. And our independence as an organization is maintained by not accepting any money from corporations or governments. This independence allows us to speak out clearly and freely with a powerful, collective voice.

We thank you, our supporters, as we reflect on the positive changes you helped make possible in 2015.
Taking action for Social Justice

With a network of 60 volunteer chapters across Canada, the Council of Canadians organizes hard-hitting campaigns to protect water, build democracy, strengthen public health care, and demand trade and climate justice.

There are many people who help in these efforts, including our tireless Chairperson Maude Barlow, our national Board of Directors, our staff in Ottawa and regional offices across Canada, our chapter activists who put these campaigns and progressive issues into action, and of course, our committed supporters who make it all possible.

Celebrating 30 years of activism

In 2015 the Council of Canadians celebrated its 30th anniversary. On March 11, 1985 the Council of Canadians was founded by publisher, author and political activist Mel Hurtig with the goals of “a new and better Canada with more and better jobs for Canadians, a higher standard of living for Canadians, and a sovereign Canada that plays an important role among the world community of nations.” Through 2015 we found special ways to mark the history and strength of our grassroots organization.

In 2014 the Harper government changed election rules through the so-called “Fair Elections Act. The new rules make it harder for some people to vote, particularly youth, Indigenous people and marginalized citizens. The new rules also prevent the Chief Electoral Officer from sharing information with voters, including investigations into election fraud, and put an end to public outreach campaigns encouraging people to vote. With the Canadian Federation of Students, we launched a constitutional challenge of the act. We also sought an injunction to prevent the most egregious elements (such as the new voter ID rules) from being implemented in the 2015 federal election. While the injunction was not granted, the constitutional challenge is still pending.

Your generous support ensured that key information and evidence was made public and widely reported by the media. The next steps in this important case will be determined once the Liberal government decides whether to repeal the act or continue to defend it in court.

Encouraging people to “Go Vote!”

Much of 2015 was devoted to achieving political change in the country. After 10 years of the Harper government systematically eroding, dismantling and endangering key programs and values in Canada, there was an urgent call for change.

One of the ways the Council of Canadians fought the unfair voting rules was by launching our largest democracy campaign to date, encouraging people to “Go Vote!” With support from CUPE, Unifor, the Directors Guild of Canada, PSAC, the United Nurses of Alberta and UA, we organized town halls across Canada, which were attended by thousands of people. We shared information on key party platforms through our Voter’s Guides.

In the spring we launched our “Game Changers” campaign aimed at getting youth – the age group that had the lowest voter turnout in the 2011 federal election – to the polls. We visited college and university campuses and provided students with information about how to register as voters and cast their ballots. We shared our Youth Voter’s Guide, which contained key information on party positions about issues youth care about.

Your generous support got people to “Go Vote!” and also empowered youth to be true game changers in the federal election. Together, we ensured a clear political change for Canada. As a non-partisan organization we will continue to push
the federal government for programs and policies that truly provide social, environmental and economic justice.

Supporting Indigenous struggles
The Council of Canadians works closely with Indigenous peoples. In April 2015, Maude Barlow and other Council representatives visited Shoal Lake No. 40 First Nation, a community located near Winnipeg that has been without access to safe, clean drinking water for more than 17 years. The Council supported the community’s call for its “Freedom Road,” which would give local residents a safer way to access water, food and jobs.

We also supported the call for an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and marched with thousands of people to Parliament Hill. We joined community efforts to stop pipelines through Indigenous territories, and supported the call to stop the massive Site C dam in British Columbia that would displace many Indigenous peoples.

Protecting water
The Council of Canadians has always been willing to wade into a water fight. In 2015, we drew attention to the Harper government’s gutting of federal protections for 99 per cent of our lakes and rivers. Through our #Pledge2Protect campaign people across the country shared photos of their unprotected lakes and rivers and used social media to raise awareness about the risks to these waterways.

Early in 2015 we launched the hard-hitting report **On Notice for a Drinking Water Crisis in Canada**. The report examined the patchwork of information regarding drinking water advisories in Canada and put a spotlight on the thousands of people who do not have safe drinking water. Some of these advisories – including ones in First Nation communities – have been in place for many years.

We challenged private water giant Nestlé, objecting to the company’s plans to draw even more water from Elora, Ontario, for its water-bottling operations.

We continued to turn more communities “blue” with our Blue Communities Project. This project gives people the tools they need to encourage their local governments to recognize water as a human right, promote publicly financed water and wastewater facilities, and ban the purchase and sale of bottled water in public facilities. In 2015 we celebrated Ts’el’alh, St’at’imc Territory becoming the first Indigenous blue community.

The Council’s Blue Planet Project works globally for water justice with allies from around the world to inform, motivate and inspire people and to push governments to implement the United Nations’ declaration of water as a human right. In 2015 the Blue Planet Project called for the human right to water to be recognized as a component of all of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Blue Planet Project staff participated in efforts to prevent water privatization in Mexico and South Korea, stop water meters in Ireland, and stop water shut-offs in Detroit, Michigan.

Stopping Energy East
Our campaign to stop TransCanada’s Energy East pipeline project, which, if built, would ship 1.1 million barrels of oil per day, continued to expand in 2015. We held townhall meetings in communities along the pipeline’s route to raise awareness and connect with local groups saying “no” to the pipeline. We are effectively building a wall of grassroots resistance to TransCanada’s broken pipeline plan and promoting what Canadians really want: clean energy alternatives to tar sands expansion.
In 2015 we worked closely with many community groups. We supported a massive rally in Red Head, New Brunswick, to show Energy East the “end of the line.” This community is where TransCanada wants to build a massive tank storage farm and export terminal.

We encouraged hundreds of people to make submissions to the Ontario Energy Board and applauded the Board’s decision to declare the Energy East pipeline “too risky” for Ontario residents.

**A better energy future**

With growing concern about the grim realities of climate change and diminishing energy resources globally, we supported communities fighting energy projects that will destroy their land, water and air. We pushed the Canadian government for strong policies that protect our environment and focus on renewable and sustainable energy solutions.

Council of Canadians chapters were active in fights against fracking in 2015 as we continued to call on the federal government to ban the extraction process that uses massive amounts of water, chemicals and sand to get at trapped underground gas reserves. Across the country, awareness is growing about the negative impacts of fracking, which include contaminated water, health concerns, pollution and more.

Council of Canadians representatives were in Paris, France, for COP21, the United Nations conference on climate change. There, we called for strong political leadership to do what is necessary to reduce the global temperature rise and ensure the future of our planet.

**Fairer trade**

The Council of Canadians’ 30-year history is rooted in speaking out against trade deals that hurt people, the environment and social policies.

The Harper government signed the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in 2014, but its ratification has been held up in the legal and translation processes. While these were ongoing, we travelled to Europe to rally opposition. In March, Maude Barlow debated the merits of the deal with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In the fall, we followed up on growing concerns with CETA and its investor-state dispute settlement provisions that allow corporations to sue governments during a 12-city, 8-country speaking tour.

Council chapters also rallied against the secrecy of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free trade zone of 12 countries including Canada, representing 40 per cent of the world’s economy.

**Strengthening public health care**

Like many social programs, public health care was slowly being dismantled under the former Harper government. In 2015 Council of Canadians chapters fought for better health care in communities across Canada. They spoke out against hospital closures and the privatization of services, and lobbied for a new health care accord that would increase federal funding levels, which, under Harper, had been cut to a new low.

We pushed for a new health accord between the federal government and the provinces that would include a national pharmacare program and better long-term care, home care and mental health care so people have access to the services they need.

**Thank you to our donors**

Our work is made possible by the generosity of like-minded people who believe social, economic and environmental justice is something we must all strive for. With your support, we garnered hundreds of media hits, organized major events in communities across Canada and around the world, held conferences and speaking tours, produced educational factsheets and reports, provided daily updates on our website at www.canadians.org and on social media, and delivered informative articles in Canadian Perspectives.

These remarkable achievements are made possible by your financial contributions. More than $3.9 million was received from supporter donations this fiscal year, which represents 86 per cent of total revenue. Please see the Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenses which shows our sources of revenue and how we spent this funding.

**Your donations make a difference**

We extend a most heartfelt thank you to all of our donors for supporting our work!
The Council of Canadians would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who donated to our Citizens’ Agenda Fund (CAF). These leadership-level contributions made it possible to achieve many campaign victories in 2015. Please visit our website at www.canadians.org/CAF to see a list of our CAF contributors.

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Each dollar you give to the Council is spent on the following:

- **Political work** 58.3 cents
- **National campaigns** 29.7 cents
- **Local/regional campaigns** 14.7 cents
- **Conferences/other political work** 8.9 cents
- **International campaigns** 5.0 cents
- **Fundraising** 20.2 cents
- **Communications** 13.3 cents
- **Administration/support** 8.3 cents

Revenue sources 2014-2015

- **Memberships and Contributions** 86%
- **Program Funding Contributions** 12%
- **Interest and Other** 2%
ImagiNations

Pictured above and around clockwise) The Council of Canadians held its 2015 Annual Conference in Windsor, Ontario last October. A rally was held on the banks of the Detroit River; Marion Overholt and Pat Noonan received Activist of the Year Awards; Maude Barlow speaks at the rally; keynote speakers at the public forum included Gordon Laxer, Dr. Pamela Palmater, Maude Barlow and Jerry Dias; members of the Detroit People's Water Board received the Water Warriors Award; Windsor Chapter activist Doug Hayes received the Maude Barlow Founder's Award.
Join us in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, October 14-16, 2016

This year, our Annual Conference and Supporters’ Meeting moves to St. John’s in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will be held at the Sheraton Hotel October 14-16. It will be an action-packed weekend you won’t want to miss! The awards dinner will take place on Saturday at the Johnson Geo Centre and the Supporters’ Meeting on Sunday will return to the Sheraton Hotel. Check our website at www.canadians.org for updates and more information as it becomes available.

We look forward to seeing our supporters, chapter activists and allies in person again this year.

The Council of Canadians’ Annual Conference and Supporters’ Meeting
October 14-16
The Sheraton Hotel
115 Cavendish Square, St. John’s, NL A1C 3K2

Conference hotel reservations: September 12
To obtain the negotiated group rate of $204 per night + 17% taxes, you must book by 5:00 p.m. AT on September 12, 2016. Call toll-free 1-888-870-3033 to make reservations and specify you are with the Council of Canadians group.

Check our website in the coming months at www.canadians.org for alternative accommodations at nearby bed-and-breakfasts and hotels.

Advance registration: August 3 to October 6
Registration information will be posted on our website at www.canadians.org starting August 3. Advance registration closes at 5:00 p.m. ET October 6.

Resolutions: September 9
Proposed resolutions must be received by September 9, 2016. After this date, only emergency resolutions on issues that could not have been foreseen by the deadline date will be considered.

Ensure you are a supporter in good standing
Being a Council of Canadians supporter in good standing allows you to vote on policy resolutions at the annual Supporters’ Meeting. To be a supporter in good standing you need to have donated $10 or more at least 30 days before the meeting (by September 16, 2016), and no more than 12 months before October 16, 2016.

Members of the Council of Canadians’ Campbell River Chapter sent a message to local politicians on March 22, World Water Day, calling on them to protect water. Chapters across the country organized actions in support of water that day.
Blood Reserve Chapter: A community taking a stand

The Council of Canadians recently welcomed its first Indigenous chapter. The Blood Reserve Chapter was formed by Council of Canadians Board Member Lois Frank and local activist Kimberly Weasel Fat. We spoke with them about their local efforts.

Why is social and environmental justice important to you?
Lois: I made a stand against hydraulic fracturing on the Blood Reserve [in September 2011] because I was concerned about the water and the environment. I was an educator at the University of Lethbridge for 10 years, so I knew what was happening. I went to court seven times and represented myself. Eventually they just dropped the charges, but I thought, what will happen if our whole land is leased to oil companies? What will happen to our land and our water? All we have is our health, our kids, our grandchildren. What if we leave them with a wasteland? I was standing in front of 25 fracking trucks and I was the one charged with intimidation.

Kimberly: Growing up on the reserve I experienced systemic racism and didn’t really understand what it was at the time, but knew something wasn’t fair. When I became a mother, that’s when I realized I wanted to do something to change the way things worked. When Idle No More burst onto the scene I lost my sister and I lost her to that system. When I became a mother I opened up my eyes. I want to be part of a change for my kids. I want them to have a better life and I don’t want them to have the struggles we had.

Do you have feelings, as an Indigenous person, about the complexity of organizing under a “Canadian” banner when many Indigenous activists avoid identifying as Canadian?
Lois: I am proud to be a Blood Tribe member, and an Albertan and a Canadian. I am proud of my own heritage. In terms of being labelled Council of Canadians, I’m proud of that, because of the work they do in social justice. That is what we need in our communities!

Kimberly: The first time I heard about the Council I was a volunteer Idle No More organizer. We had a teach-in, talking about our rights and things that Harper was trying to do. A bunch of people from the Calgary Council of Canadians chapter came and they were so supportive. It was so refreshing. In the context of racism in my homeland it makes my heart smile when I meet people who aren’t racist. The Council of Canadians gives me a chance to stand up for my community.

What do you hope the chapter can do for your community?
Kimberly: We intend to provide a safe space for people to share their concerns and ideas while supporting positive action. We are excited about our screening of Fractured Land with Caleb Behn coming!

Lois: We are focused on educating people. We have workshops every month on issues such as health, education, leadership, land rights and parenting. Residential schools had a major impact, and we lost traditional parenting.

For more information about joining a Council of Canadians chapter visit our website at www.canadians.org/chapters.
Chapter Action Updates

by Philippe-A Charbonneau

Council of Canadians chapters have been active in communities across Canada raising awareness about climate change and the need for a new way forward, trade deals and how they hurt communities, why it’s better to keep utilities public, and much more.

Film screenings address climate change

In the past six months more than 20 Council of Canadians chapters have shown the documentary film *This Changes Everything* in communities across Canada. The film is an attempt to re-imagine the vast challenge of climate change. Directed by Avi Lewis, and inspired by Naomi Klein’s international non-fiction bestseller of the same name, this film presents powerful portraits of communities on the front lines – from Montana’s Powder River Basin to the Alberta tar sands, from the coast of South India to Beijing and beyond. After their screenings, many chapters have introduced and discussed the “Leap Manifesto,” a document that calls on people to speak out for a Canada based on caring for the Earth and for one another.

Trans-Pacific Partnership tour

Close to 20 Council of Canadians chapters across the country have organized public events in their communities with Health Canada whistleblower Dr. Shiv Chopra. Dr. Chopra spoke about new rules in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that will allow milk from cows that have been given bovine growth hormone (commonly referred to as BGH, rBGH and rBST) into Canada. BGH is an artificial growth hormone that was developed to increase milk output from dairy cows. Its use has been banned in Canada for health safety reasons.

Keep hydro public

The London chapter of the Council of Canadians and Hydro One Not for Sale staged sit-ins at Deputy Premier and London North Centre MPP Deb Matthews’ office to oppose the privatization of Hydro One. Bringing banners and visual props, chapter members and local activists used the weekly sit-ins to raise awareness about the importance of keeping hydro services in public hands.

The London chapter is particularly concerned about how privatization will open Ontario to greater liability under free trade deals. Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) clauses included in many trade deals allow corporations to sue governments if legislation or policies interfere with profits. Under NAFTA, American corporation MESA power sued the Canadian government for $775 million because local energy producers were given preference to create jobs under the Ontario’s FIT program.

Reinstate Dr. Cleary

Fredericton, Kent County and Saint John chapters called on the New Brunswick government to reinstate Dr. Eilish Cleary as the province’s chief medical officer of health. The provincial government placed Dr. Cleary on leave in December and subsequently fired her. Kent County chapter activist Ann Pohl had contacted Dr. Cleary and asked her to study the health and environmental impacts of the herbicide glyphosate, which is used by the forestry company J.D. Irving Ltd. and NB Power. It is widely believed this is why Dr. Cleary was dismissed.

The Fredericton chapter held a media conference in December to highlight the call for Dr. Cleary’s reinstatement. While Dr. Cleary was ultimately not reinstated, chapters continue to press for independent and accountable health officials.

Community forum on LNG proposal

The Victoria chapter and allies organized a community forum in February about the proposed Steelhead-Malahat liquefied natural gas (LNG) project that would send natural gas through an underwate pipeline from Washington State, through the Gulf Islands, to Vancouver Island.

The Council of Canadians is opposed to LNG terminal and pipeline projects. If just five LNG terminals are built they would release 13 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. The fracking and transport of the gas would generate an additional 15 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. The gas needed for five of these LNG terminals would also require an estimated 582 billion litres of water from B.C.’s rivers, lakes and streams. And just five LNG terminals could require an estimated 39,000 new wells by 2040, the majority of which would likely be fracked.

#RefugeesWelcome

Council of Canadians chapters from Kamloops, Chilliwack, Victoria, Prince Edward Island, Fredericton, St. John’s, Quill Plains, South Niagara, Ottawa and London took part in #RefugeesWelcome rallies last fall. The Council of Canadians supports diversity and inclusion and rejects racism and Islamophobia.

Philippe-A Charbonneau is the Political Team Administrative Assistant for the Council of Canadians.
Now that the election dust has settled and the federal government has delivered its first budget, all eyes are on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and federal ministers to see whether they will deliver on their “real change” promises.

For the sake of clean lakes and rivers, we hope so.

During its nine years in power, the Harper government slashed critical funding and gutted freshwater protections. In the report *Blue Betrayal: The Harper government’s assault on Canada’s freshwater*, Maude Barlow describes the Conservative government’s record of gutting water protections: “The Harper government has taken clear steps to gut the regulatory framework that – modest as it was – offered some protections to lakes, rivers and groundwater in Canada, and turned policy and practice upside down to advance the interests of the energy industry.”

Harper’s 2012 omni-budget bills gutted the Fisheries Act and removed protections from the Navigable Waters Protection Act for 99 per cent of the lakes and rivers in Canada. Changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) resulted in the cancellation of 3,000 environmental assessments, many of which were oil and gas projects on Indigenous lands and in rural communities.

These changes were a flashpoint for Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, unions and community residents. The omni-budget bills led to the creation of the Indigenous-led movement Idle No More and a group supporting science-based evidence called Evidence for Democracy. The bills also led the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada to abandon its traditional position of neutrality to campaign against Harper.

Despite the change in government last fall, Harper’s freshwater legacy lives on. Many oil and gas, mining, pipeline and other projects are moving forward with little to no federal scrutiny.

In the October 2015 federal election, Justin Trudeau and his party promised “real change.” Trudeau reiterated some of these campaign promises in his mandate letter to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna. They included the following:

- A renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples,
- Treating freshwater as a precious resource that deserves protection and careful stewardship,
- Immediately reviewing Canada’s environmental assessment processes to regain public trust,
- Renewing its commitment to protect the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River Basin.

Minister McKenna has taken some steps to restore freshwater and environmental protections.

**Decision on Great Lakes nuke waste dump delayed**

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) wants to build a controversial deep geologic repository (DGR) for low and intermediate level radioactive waste at the Bruce nuclear site in Kincardine, Ontario. If the project is approved, nuclear waste
that is considered hazardous for hundreds of thousands of years would be stored just a few hundred metres from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin, the source of drinking water for roughly 40 million people.

So it came as a welcome surprise when Minister McKenna, who was slated to make a decision on the DGR on March 1, rejected the Joint Review Panel’s report and requested additional information and further studies on the environmental assessment for the project. The move is significant because it highlights the limitations of the environmental assessment process (CEAA 2012) implemented by the Harper government and indicates that the Liberal government is beginning to address them.

Lake Ontario Waterkeepers notes, “One way that CEAA 2012 differs from CEAA 1992 is by reducing the scope of environmental assessments. CEAA 1992 required decision makers to consider ‘the need for the project and alternatives to the project.’ By comparison, CEAA 2012 only requires decision makers to consider ‘alternative means of carrying out the designated project.’ This narrower requirement accounts for one gap in the current environmental assessment report. During the process OPG discussed ‘alternative means’ on the same site (e.g., above-ground storage) and also noted that the proposed site was equivalent to a hypothetical repository in high-quality granite. However, despite broad public concern about the site’s proximity to Lake Huron, OPG did not examine a single alternative location. The Minister’s request that OPG study specific alternative locations shows a dissatisfaction with the current approach to environmental assessments.”

Fracked gas terminals undergo weaker environmental assessments
In B.C., there are 20 proposals for liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals slated for the Pacific coast. Communities have raised many concerns about them, including the impacts on wild salmon and aquatic life, the violation of the self-determination of Indigenous communities, the potential for increased fracking and its impacts to water sources, and the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and how this will compromise the 1.5 degree global warming limit Canada agreed to in Paris.

The National Energy Board has granted export licences in response to most of the proposals. Two LNG project proposals were cancelled under the 2012 changes to the CEAA. Several other environmental assessments have been started under the weakened CEAA 2012, which has a narrower scope and narrower definition of “environmental effects.” These weakened environmental assessments include projects by Pacific Northwest (led by multinational energy giant Petronas) on Lelu Island, Woodfibre LNG in Howe Sound, WesPac on Tilbury Island in Delta, and Aurora LNG on Digby Island.

Following McKenna’s January announcement on interim measures for environmental assessments, steps have also been taken to include consideration of greenhouse gas emissions for the Woodfibre and Aurora LNG projects.

Blakes, a law firm that provides legal services to businesses in Canada and internationally, prepared the assessment Overview of the Permitting Requirements for LNG Projects in British Columbia, which highlights how the changes to the former Navigable Waters Protection Act – renamed the Navigation Protection Act (NPA) – affects the permitting process of LNG terminals. The overview points out that “The most significant aspect of the amendments relates to its prohibition and associated approvals of construction of works associated with navigable waters. The NPA will no longer prohibit works over all navigable waters, but rather will only prohibit works on navigable waters that are listed in a schedule to the NPA, which includes three oceans, 97 lakes and 62 rivers across Canada ... [O]nly works associated with the LNG plant that will substantially interfere with navigation on waterways listed in the schedule, will require approvals.”

Steps still need to be taken to bring protections back for the 99 per cent of lakes and rivers left unprotected under the Navigation Protection Act. Pipelines must be brought back under this legislation – Harper also exempted them in 2012.

For the Energy East pipeline, which, if approved, would be North America’s largest oil pipeline, here is what the interim principles will mean:

- Natural Resources Canada will undertake deeper consultations with Indigenous peoples.
- The government will facilitate expanded public input into the National Energy Board review process.
- The Government of Canada will assess the upstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with the project and make this information public.

While this is promising, the devil is in the details, says Council of Canadians Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner Andrea Harden-Donahue. And it is concerning that just days before McKenna’s announcement, Trudeau appeared to throw his support behind the Energy East Pipeline – a pipeline that threatens 961 waterways and would make water issues in communities like Shoal Lake No. 40 First Nation worse.

Federal support for risky pipeline and energy projects will call into question the federal government’s commitment to protect freshwater. Members of Parliament must #Pledge2Protect Lakes and Rivers and review all of Harper’s omni-budget bill changes to freshwater protections, restore the lost protections, and implement strict safeguards for water within the framework of the United Nations-recognized human right to water.

Respecting Indigenous title and water rights and recognizing that water is a human right, part of a shared commons and a public trust, are essential to the “real change” that people in Canada voted for. A safe and secure future for water depends on it.

Emma Lui is the Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Renewed Hope for a Better Canada Through Monthly Giving

by Dana Chapeskie

The Council of Canadians’ work often depends on being able to react quickly and effectively to issues. Protecting lakes, rivers and drinking water, building opposition to harmful corporate trade deals, supporting communities fighting Big Oil pipelines and fracking, and saving health care from devastating cuts – none of it would be possible without the generous donations of our supporters.

The monthly giving program plays an integral part in providing the needed stability for the Council to respond to urgent events, plan for the day-to-day needs of our core campaigns, and fight for strong policies in support of water, environment, climate, fair trade and public health care.

Recently, we had an opportunity to speak with Herb John, a long-time union organizer and dedicated Council of Canadians supporter about his decision to give through the Council’s monthly giving program.

Please tell us a bit about yourself.
I was born in Windsor, Ontario. I worked at Ford Motor Company for 30 years and retired at 49 years of age. I was an elected union representative for the last 20 years I worked. After I retired, I spent a year and a half building a house on Walpole Island, which is a First Nations community where my wife was born. I started getting involved with social justice issues at the age of 14 with the California grape growers protest of the farmers’ poor pay and working conditions. Following retirement, I was elected to the CAW National Retiree Executive and then elected President of the National Pensioners Federation. I also sit on the local board for the hospital.

What issues are closest to your heart?
I am very concerned about the trade deals and Canada losing our sovereignty. Also, the environmental damage that we have done in the last 50 years is incomprehensible. I am also concerned about the disproportionate distribution of wealth in Canada and globally and the lack of political will to infringe on profit to try to preserve the planet.

What first encouraged you to join the Council of Canadians?
The first issue was NAFTA. I remember in the eighties when Maude Barlow and CAW President Bob White were touring the country talking about the danger of NAFTA. I think back to that time quite often because a lot of what they warned Canadians about has happened.

What hopes do you have for the Trudeau government and Canada’s future?
I would like to see the [Trudeau government] stand firm on their commitments to the environment, the political culture through changes in the voting system, health care and addressing the trade agreements.

The biggest change I would like to see is for the government to take major steps in the growing inequality of prosperity in Canada. That is at the root of all our other issues. If that problem was resolved we wouldn’t have to continuously look at an austerity budget or cuts in education or health care.

Why do you prefer to give on a monthly basis to the Council?
I know that monthly support makes it so much easier for the Council to budget for campaigns to promote social justice. Not only is it easier for me to budget, most importantly, it is a benefit to the organization because it is a dependable stream of income. It just makes sense to give on a monthly basis.

What would you say to someone considering donating to the Council of Canadians?
I would encourage someone to give to the Council. It is one of the best organizations to support because the Council is not influenced by financial donations from government or corporate funding. The Council is free to democratically represent the interests of its supporters.

For more information about the Council of Canadians’ monthly giving program, please contact Dana Chapeskie by email at dchapeskie@canadians.org or by calling toll-free 1-800-387-7177, ext. 254.
When TransCanada first proposed the massive 1.1-million-barrel-per-day Energy East pipeline from Alberta to New Brunswick in August 2013, it was pitched as the “no-brainer” with broad political support. What a difference two years makes.

The Council of Canadians was first to warn about the serious risks this new massive export oil pipeline poses to our waterways, climate and communities. Since then, TransCanada has faced a series of major hurdles to their proposal.

Cacouna, Quebec export port cancelled
Quebec communities and social movements mounted an impressive campaign to stop the controversial export port, which was to be located beside an endangered Beluga whale habitat in the Saint Lawrence River. TransCanada officials cancelled the port in April 2015, forcing a two-year delay to the project. This also added to TransCanada’s ballooning costs, which have increased by one-third, to $15.7 billion, prompting questions about the economic viability of the project.

Rising tide of community opposition
From packed Ontario Energy Board consultations, to Quebec mayors and municipalities representing 6 million residents voicing opposition, to a 700-person strong march to the “end of the (pipeline) path” in Red Head, New Brunswick, Energy East is facing a growing wall of opposition. According to a poll commissioned by Climate Action Network, 61 per cent of Canadians agree that protecting the climate is more important than building the Energy East pipeline and expanding the tar sands.

Indigenous concerns
Ontario’s Regional Chief Stan Beardy has expressed grave concerns about the National Energy Board (NEB) process. In a recent open letter, the Assemblies of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador and Manitoba Chiefs said the NEB review is devoid of legitimacy, calling for its cancellation until a new process is agreed on. Other communities, like those within Treaty 3, the Grand Wolastoq Council, Kanesatake and Kahnawake, have openly declared their concerns and opposition.

New provincial and federal hurdles
Quebec will conduct a provincial review of the project. Ontario’s review found that Energy East presents more risks than benefits. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated that governments grant permits for projects like Energy East but communities grant permission. More recently, the Trudeau government announced Energy East will fall under interim review measures while the government makes changes to the NEB and the environmental assessment process. This will add more public consultations and a climate test for the pipeline. It also means an extra nine months is tacked onto the timeline before a final federal decision is made.

The Council of Canadians has worked with and supported groups opposing the pipeline. We have released reports and briefs (available online at www.canadians.org/energyeast), participated in municipal and provincial review processes, and held town halls and lobby meetings to connect with affected communities and decision makers.
Council chapters and supporters are also taking action by sending letters and emails to put political pressure on elected officials.

While we have made clear progress, there are still significant challenges to overcome before we can stop this project.

**Trudeau government in murky middle ground on pipelines**

In January, the federal government announced a new review process that includes evaluating climate impacts. It's not clear whether this climate test will do what it needs to do – reject the Energy East pipeline and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipelines. However, some federal ministers – and Trudeau himself – continue to say they want to get Alberta oil to “tidewater,” alluding to a desire for one or both of these controversial projects to proceed.

Filling the Energy East pipeline could result in an increase of up to 40 per cent in tar sands production and generate up to 32 million tonnes of carbon pollution. Along with Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain expansion, it could unleash 45.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gases annually. This is more than the annual climate pollution of eight provinces and territories.

A scientific report in *Nature* reveals that Energy East alone (which has a 40-year lifespan) threatens to exceed Canada’s two-degree carbon budget in about 19 years. A 1.5 degrees Celsius target, which the Canadian government supported at the UN climate talks in Paris, requires an even stricter limit to the amount of oil that can be extracted from the tar sands.

The federal announcement of new rules for evaluating pipelines puts the Energy East review under transition, or interim measures even though the current NEB review has not even officially begun. TransCanada should be told to resubmit their application under the new, improved review process. Undoubtedly, industry’s lobbying power has prevented this.

**Despite the patriotic rhetoric, the Energy East pipeline is primarily for export. Up to 90 per cent of its contents will be shipped overseas unrefined.**

**Unifying around the protection of water**

Following public consultations, where a resounding 97 per cent of participants rejected the Energy East pipeline, Montreal-area mayors came out strongly against the project. Their announcement opposing the pipeline was met with harsh criticism, particularly from Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, Calgary’s Mayor and the Alberta Wildrose Party. The media portrayed this as a west versus east showdown, where Montreal and Quebec stand in the way of Alberta crude getting to eastern Canadian refineries.

Despite the patriotic rhetoric, the Energy East pipeline is primarily for export. Up to 90 per cent of its contents will be shipped overseas unrefined.

**The Council of Canadians continues the fight to stop Energy East**

Here are some of the ways we are taking action:
- Building community opposition along the pipeline path.
- Lobbying federal MPs to improve pipeline reviews and implement a fair climate test.
- Participating in federal consultations and encouraging others to do so.
- Supporting Indigenous opposition.
- Releasing briefs and reports that expose the pipeline’s risks.
- Holding town halls and meetings in Winnipeg, North Bay, Ottawa and three New Brunswick communities.
- Organizing with landowners in New Brunswick and at the “end of the line” in Red Head, New Brunswick.
- Participating in provincial reviews.

For more information about how you can be involved in stopping the Energy East pipeline visit our website at www.canadians.org/energyeast.

Andrea Harden-Donahue is the Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Promoting Public Health Care on the Hill

The Council of Canadians joined with public health care advocates from across Canada during National Medicare Week to lobby MPs on Parliament Hill. Five Council of Canadians representatives participated in some of the more than 140 meetings held, telling MPs that Canada needs federal leadership in health care.

Lobbying – people meeting with their MPs to talk about issues that affect them – is an important public policy intervention that can effect change for the greater good. Everyone is affected by problems in the health care system and should have a say in shaping the policies and solutions needed for a better future for all of us.

After nearly a decade of neglect under the Harper government, Canada’s medicare is entering the most important period since its creation. It is crucial that the Liberal government strengthens the foundations of medicare, Canada’s most cherished social program.

To encourage MPs to strengthen medicare, volunteers taking part in the health care lobby focused on four key issues.

The first issue was the health accord, which the former Harper government let expire in 2014, leaving provinces and territories without stable funding and facing a decreased federal role in health care. Lobbyists called for a new 10-year deal with increased federal funding to cover at least 25 per cent of provincial health care costs.

The Canada Health Act (CHA) was another point of discussion as the health system faces more pressure to privatize services. Lobbyists stated the health accord must include conditions that link funding with upholding the
principles of the act. When violations occur, the federal government must enforce the CHA.

Third, the health accord must include funds for a National Seniors Strategy. Seniors across Canada should have access to quality public hospitals, acute care, home care, long-term care, palliative care and hospice care. This continuum of care should fall under the principles of the CHA, whether in hospital or outside of it. Instead of a patchwork across the country, we need a strategy to help seniors live healthy lives with dignity.

Finally, Canada remains the only OECD country with medicare that does not have a national pharmacare system. This means that 1 in 5 Canadians cannot afford to fill their prescriptions, which leaves millions of people in poorer health. Studies have shown that up to $11 billion could be saved annually through a universal and comprehensive pharmacare program.

Leo Broderick, a Council of Canadians Board member and chapter activist from Prince Edward Island, was part of a group that met with four different MPs.

The MPs – all Atlantic-based Liberals – were supportive of a new health accord and a strategy to deal with the health issues of our aging population. All had favourable comments about a national pharmacare program so people can get the prescription drugs they need, but some expressed concern about how to pay for it. On the question of enforcing the national standards in the Canada Health Act, including the ban on extra billing and user fees and enforcement of reporting requirements, Broderick said MPs were reluctant to be heavy handed.

With the campaign trail fresh in their minds, Broderick said MPs heard from people who were concerned about finding a family doctor, longer wait times, and the rising costs of prescription drugs.

“My overall impression from listening to all four Liberal MPs is that the Finance Minister and the message he is giving to the Liberal caucus – a message that the fiscal reality will make it difficult to fulfill election promises – will diminish their commitment to fully protecting Canada’s medicare system, or to push for major improvements,” said Broderick.

However, the federal government sets its spending priorities through the budget process. Additional health care funding could be found if it is a government priority.

Council of Canadians Board members Ken Kavanagh and Andrea Furlong met with two Liberal MPs from Newfoundland and Labrador.

Both MPs were supportive of negotiating a new health care accord, but would not commit to reinstating the full amount of funding cut by the Harper government. MPs were also reluctant to impose standards of care in the new accord, saying provinces should have this responsibility.

Kavanagh likes the idea of more federal involvement. “As a Canadian citizen, I welcomed federal involvement in the health care in my province and wanted them to put conditions on their fiscal contribution to health care in the form of demanding national standards of care,” he said. “In my view, I am better protected with two levels of government looking after my health care needs.”

Furlong said both MPs seemed happy to have these meetings. Based on discussions, she felt confident there will be a new health care accord, but thought that MPs need more information about a national pharmacare plan before anything can move forward.

Privatization in the form of public-private partnerships was also on the table.

Ailish Morgan-Welden, an Organizing Assistant with the Council of Canadians, also felt the four Liberal MPs she spoke with were receptive to hearing from constituents. She did have some concern though that a lot of rebuilding is needed in the health care system after years of federal neglect and dismantling.

“I felt hopeful that the new government is at least open to hearing from constituents and lobby groups and that there seemed to be genuine openness to hearing feedback,” said Morgan-Welden. “But as a younger person, I did feel discouraged that many MPs did not seem willing to acknowledge the ways that the health care system is failing younger people, particularly those doing precarious work with no access to benefits.”

Michael Butler, Health Care Campaigner for the Council of Canadians, also lobbied four MPs, including Conservative MP Lisa Raitt. He hopes that more people will make the time to meet with their MPs.

“Lobbying can be a bit of a nerve wracking experience at first. It can feel a bit uncomfortable, but in order to make real progress we need to move beyond our comfort zones...”
**Chapter Contacts**

The Council of Canadians appreciates the energy and dedication of our chapter activists. If you are interested in joining a chapter please see the contacts list below, or get in touch with the regional office closest to you. For more information on the Council’s chapters, visit www.canadians.org or call us at 1-800-387-7177.

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