Summer is here – it’s a time for reflection on a hectic season that just passed and another coming up!

Over the winter and spring, your Council team was working hard on your behalf. We developed a great toolkit to help individuals and groups promote a national pharmacare plan in their communities and workplaces. We worked with allies in Mexico and the U.S. to promote our vision of a just and fair trade agreement for the continent and continued to work with allies in Europe to oppose the Canada-EU Economic and Trade Agreement.

We furthered the campaign to have municipalities, faith-based groups and others become Blue Communities and pledge to protect water as a human right and public trust. We fought water-threatening projects such as fracking and big dams, to name just two, and launched a boycott of Nestlé in our challenge to stop that company from exporting precious groundwater sources. We supported local campaigns against municipal water privatization. We fought new pipelines that would carry tar sands bitumen laced with toxic chemicals across thousands of waterways and challenged the Trudeau government to live up to its commitment to the Paris climate agreement.

Our chapters continue to do amazing things! They have never been more engaged, making themselves heard on everything from public health care to continuing to fight for electoral reform. I am so grateful for their leadership, their vision and their commitment to a just Canada and world.

As an organization, we continue to work closely with local First Nations communities and support the amazing leadership so many have shown in these and other struggles.

I have been exceptionally busy – even for me! Besides continuing to speak out about the issues in Boiling Point, my book on Canada’s water crisis, I wrote a report on the threat free trade agreements pose to water protection laws and how they promote the commodification of the world’s water. I spoke at a large church in New York City for World Water Day, travelled to Berlin to promote it becoming a Blue Community, toured B.C. on a pre-provincial election water awareness campaign, and shared my concerns about threats to the Great Lakes at a large gathering in Chicago.

Everywhere I have gone, I have met with wonderful people fighting to protect their local environmental heritage and public services from the onslaught of economic globalization. This has never felt as urgent as we hear more from U.S. President Donald Trump and his promise to put “America first.”

On a final note, I am shifting my role slightly at the Council of Canadians, moving into the important position of Honorary Chairperson. I will still be front and centre and involved in campaigns and with our chapters, working with you on the important issues that we face. Please join me in welcoming Leo Broderick as the new Chairperson of the Council of Canadians’ Board of Directors and Andrea Furlong as Vice Chair.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your ongoing support.

Maude Barlow,  
Honorary Chairperson  
The Council of Canadians
Pharmacare is a Prescription for Better Medicine

Canadians know that a universal, national drug coverage plan – also known as pharmacare – is long overdue. Canada has the unique distinction of being the only country with a universal, national public health care plan not to include prescription drug coverage. The fact that health policy experts at all levels of government, labour groups, the business community, health care advocates, and the public continue to put forward the idea of universal pharmacare shows there is strong passion for better and more equitable medicare in Canada.

No other policy change and program can have the same kind of positive impact on the well-being of Canadians, while saving as much as $14 billion or more annually, than universal pharmacare. The evidence shows that our current system is untenable in the long term since it cannot control rising drug costs.

With your help, and with the generous assistance of our partners in Labour, the Council of Canadians is launching a new educational Pharmacare Toolkit that gives people the information and tools they need to speak to their MPs, employers, neighbours and friends about the importance and urgent need for pharmacare.

Canada needs pharmacare because:

- Prescription drug costs are skyrocketing. Total spending on prescription drugs has nearly quadrupled since the 1990s, of which 42 per cent is financed by the public sector and 23 per cent is paid out-of-pocket by patients. In 2016, Canadians filled more than 600 million prescriptions at a cost of more than $30 billion.

- Employers are struggling to contain costs on benefits programs for employees. Benefits remain among the top issues in 2017 for both employers and Labour. Reports indicate Canadian companies spend about $200 million per week on prescription drugs in costs incurred by employer drug plans. In 2017, projections show that the medical costs for group benefits plans will increase by eight per cent due largely to increasing drug costs and Canada’s aging population.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress, in 2013, 73 per cent of full-time employees had health benefits coverage by their employer, compared to only 27 per cent for part-time workers. Canadians working low-income jobs are the most vulnerable in our system as they generally do not have drug coverage as part of their employment, but they earn “too much” to be covered under public plans.

For workers aged 25 and under only 25 per cent have employer-provided benefits. This comes at a time when approximately 39 per cent of workers between the ages of 15 and 29 are precariously employed. The Ontario government has recently taken steps to address this issue by launching a new program that will provide coverage for prescribed medications for youth 25 and younger.

With rising drug costs and only a limited number of people having drug plan coverage in Canada, it is not surprising that studies show that one in three Canadians with incomes under $50,000 reported that they or someone in their house were not able to take their medication as prescribed – if at all – because of costs.

The solution to these runaway costs is clear – by adopting a universal pharmacare system, which has the tools and buying power to attain reasonable costs for the medications Canadians need, we create a system that benefits everyone.

You can be a part of the solution! Visit the Council of Canadians website at canadians.org/pharmacare or call us at toll-free at 1-800-387-7177 to obtain your own Pharmacare Toolkit and take action in your community. Your generous donations also make it possible for us to get these toolkits into the hands of people across the country.

Web: canadians.org/pharmacare

Report: A Prescription for Better Medicine: How universal pharmacare would give Canada an economic advantage
canadians.org/bettermedicine
Nestlé Should Not Be First in Line for Water

Mark Calzavara, Ontario-Quebec Regional Organizer

Not long ago, bottled water was a small niche market selling mostly imported mineral water in glass bottles as an occasional luxury. But clever advertising turned it into a multi-billion dollar industry that is depleting community aquifers and producing a staggering amount of plastic waste.

The tide is turning though.

Nestlé, the world’s largest bottled water company, is facing a groundswell of opposition worldwide. In Canada, thanks to your generous support, the Council of Canadians has been leading the challenge against Nestlé.

• Cities in California, Oregon, Maine, Michigan, British Columbia and Ontario are trying to limit the exploitation of their groundwater reserves by Nestlé and other water bottlers.

• More than 50,000 people have signed a Council of Canadians’ pledge to boycott Nestlé bottled water and other products.

• The Council’s Blue Communities Project – municipal designations recognizing the support of the human right to water, public water services and rejecting bottled water – are forming worldwide, even in Switzerland, Nestlé’s own backyard!

• The World Council of Churches has banned bottled water from churches.

• In Ontario, public pressure has caused the provincial government to change the rules for bottled water permits.

Awareness about the problems with bottled water is growing, and not a moment too soon!

There are significant impacts at the source where the groundwater is pumped out. Aquifers replenish very slowly and shipping bottled water away from the aquifer means it can never return to recharge it, unlike with most other groundwater uses. Earlier this year, Council of Canadians chapter members found Nestlé bottled water from Aberfoyle, Ontario for sale as far away as St. John’s, Newfoundland – 3,147 kilometres from the source of the water. And Nestlé bottled water from Hope, B.C. (Nestlé’s only other bottling plant in Canada) was found for sale by chapter members as far away as Yellowknife (2,126 km) and Winnipeg (2,144 km).

About 1500 ml of water must be extracted to produce a 500 ml bottle of water. The energy wasted producing, filling and shipping that same bottle is equivalent to approximately 125 ml of oil. In contrast, municipal tap water is available in most communities without the same waste or pollution.

The next two years will be critical in Ontario as Nestlé seeks permit renewals for all three of its wells, which allow the company to pump out almost 6 million litres of water per day.

In April, the Ontario government announced modest changes to how bottled water companies are regulated in the province. Ontario said it would:

• Implement a mandatory 10 to 30 per cent reduction for water taking during drought.

• Increase Indigenous and public notification, consultation and reporting processes. The government failed to say that community consent would be required for bottled water permits to be issued.

This falls well short of the demands made by more than 10,000 Council of Canadians supporters like you who called for a permanent moratorium on new permits, a phase out of current bottled water permits, and the recognition of the right to free, prior and informed consent for affected Indigenous peoples.

People and communities should not have to wait in line for water behind mega-corporations like Nestlé.

If you haven’t done so already, please add your name to our online Boycott Nestlé pledge at canadians.org/nestle.
Pipelines of Discord, Spring of Possibilities

By Daniel Cayley-Daoust, Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner

Last November, the Council of Canadians helped coordinate more than 50 vigils across the country to oppose Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline. Sixteen Council of Canadians chapters took part, but despite massive opposition shown by communities and Indigenous nations, and the concerns they raised about unmitigated risks to water and the climate, the Trudeau government went ahead and approved the pipeline project. This pipeline expansion will mean even more tar sands production and make it less likely for Canada to meet its climate change reduction commitments.

In fact, by early 2017 the Trudeau government approved and began promoting three major pipeline projects: Kinder Morgan’s 890,000 barrels per day Trans Mountain pipeline, Enbridge’s 760,000 barrels per day Line 3 pipeline, and TransCanada’s 830,000 barrels per day Keystone XL pipeline. In early June, Liberal and Conservative MPs voted in support of a motion affirming federal support of the Kinder Morgan pipeline in an effort to squelch growing provincial opposition.

The good news is that federal approval does not mean these pipelines are a done deal. Indigenous communities are leading the resistance to these projects in order to protect the water and the health of their communities. First Nations and environmental groups have launched several lawsuits to challenge federal approvals for the Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipelines, and U.S. groups are challenging U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent approval of Keystone XL.

With your generous support, the Council of Canadians has helped connect communities in the fights against the pipelines. We have also questioned the financing of these companies. Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline, for example, has been facing financial troubles in the U.S. When it was reported earlier this year that the company was approaching institutional investors such as the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan (OTPP) for funding, the Council of Canadians jumped into action.

The OTPP quickly confirmed it would not invest in the pipeline project. In February we started putting pressure on the CPPIB. More than 7,000 Council of Canadians supporters sent the CPPIB letters, asking the board not to invest their pension funds in building new pipelines. Unfortunately, to date, the CPPIB has remained silent on this issue. The board has until June 30 to make a final investment decision. Until then, we will keep the pressure on. Without additional funding from new sources like the CPPIB, the Kinder Morgan pipeline project may not proceed.

The Trudeau government has promised to reform the NEB through the NEB Modernization process, but has appointed pro-pipeline industry insiders to lead the review. The Council of Canadians and its chapter activists across Canada have been speaking out about this biased approach. The NEB needs to be transformed to eliminate conflicts of interest and become a true regulator in the public interest.

As both Kinder Morgan and Enbridge are setting their sights to start early phases of construction in the fall for their respective pipelines, the movement of opposition continues to grow.

With your generous support, the Council of Canadians is working to build a movement for climate solutions where justice, energy democracy and community-led initiatives are valued in the hope of building a fossil fuel-free future. There is a lot of work to be done to achieve this and to stop these pipeline projects from moving forward – thank you for being a part of it!

Web: canadians.org/kinder-morgan
NAFTA: America First, or People and the Planet First?

By Sujata Day, Trade Campaigner

U.S. President Donald Trump has made many threats about NAFTA – he has threatened to rip it up and he has threatened Canadian dairy farmers, forestry workers, and many Canadian policies. Most importantly, he has threatened that NAFTA renegotiations should put “America first.”

Here at the Council of Canadians we believe that any NAFTA renegotiation should be about making the deal better for everyone – and that can only happen by putting people and the planet first.

Often, NAFTA is pitched as a battle between Canadian, American and Mexican interests. The battlefield is for markets and the beneficiaries are corporations. Former Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney wanted NAFTA to be about oil companies making backroom pitches to U.S. politicians. This meant corporate oil interests were heard while other voices weren’t.

NAFTA has been detrimental to environmental policies in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. NAFTA’s Chapter 11, also known as investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions, allow corporations to sue governments over policies and regulations that impede their profits. All three countries’ environmental policies have been attacked through these provisions. In Canada, corporations have used ISDS to challenge laws against fracking and pesticides. Two-thirds of ISDS suits against Canada have challenged environmental regulations. In the U.S., Trans-Canada launched a $15 billion suit over the denial of the Keystone XL pipeline. The suit was dropped when President Trump agreed to approve the pipeline project. Mining companies in Mexico have used ISDS to successfully challenge environmental regulations.

The energy proportionality clause in NAFTA locks Canada into guaranteeing oil and gas exports to the U.S. This means more extreme energy production in the tar sands and fracking, and ties our economy to the petroleum industry with troubling repercussions for the planet.

Water resources are also at risk. NAFTA lists water as a tradable good, leaving it vulnerable as a potential resource grab for drought-plagued U.S. regions. With the deal’s proportionality clause, once any jurisdiction in Canada allows water exports, we would not be able to limit them.

Statistics show NAFTA has led to the abandonment of family farms in favour of large agribusiness. In the last 40 years, Canada has lost 45 per cent of its farms while agriculture exports tripled from $11 billion to $33 billion between 1988 and 2007. According to a National Farmers Union survey, net farm income fell by more than half over this same period, while Canadian farm debt doubled. Mexico, a traditional producer of corn, is now an importer of American corn and has lost an estimated 2 million job in the agricultural sector. With imports of cheap, unhealthy food, obesity rates have soared.

Many point to Mexico as a winner of jobs. However, Mexico’s poverty rate – a shocking 52 per cent – has remained the same during the NAFTA years. Mexico’s minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, fell by 26.3 per cent between 1994 and 2012. In Canada and the U.S., income inequality has risen substantially.

Trade between countries can be good, but only if it’s focused on making things better for people and for the planet. With your generous support, we are creating tools to help educate people about NAFTA and inspire them to take action for a better deal. We are creating videos, factsheets, talking points and tips they can use to meet with their Member of Parliament. Your donations also ensure the Council of Canadians will be a part of a large tri-lateral meeting with farmers, Indigenous people and Labour representatives to ensure civil society moves forward with a united voice.

NAFTA has not been a good deal for people or for the planet. With renegotiation, it is imperative that our government presses for a better, fairer deal.

(Please return using the enclosed postage-paid envelope)

YES — I agree, we must stand up to Trump on NAFTA!

Here’s my contribution to help: ☐ $45 ☐ $65 ☐ $125 ☐ $265 ☐ My choice: $__________

☐ Enclosed is my cheque, made out to The Council of Canadians
☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex

Card #: ________________________________ Expiry: _____/_____
Name on Card: __________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Donate by phone at 1-800-387-7177 or online at canadians.org. Due to the Council’s political advocacy work donations are not tax deductible.
The Capilano River travels south through Vancouver’s North Shore to the Burrard Inlet across from Stanley Park. Ten minutes from Vancouver’s downtown core, the river is a popular attraction with locals and tourists. The river has world-class kayaking and salmon fishing.

The Capilano River also flows through the Cleveland Dam, which provides 40 per cent of metro Vancouver’s drinking water. I walked the popular trail along the Capilano River to the Cleveland Dam in 2015 – when B.C. experienced one of its worst droughts – and saw how noticeably low the reservoir was that year.

As a local resident I am deeply concerned that the Capilano River is one of millions of rivers and lakes that remains unprotected under the federal Navigation Protection Act (NPA), formerly the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA).

In 2012, the former Harper government removed protections from 99 per cent of lakes and rivers under the NWPA. This change meant that only pipeline, dam, mining or other industrial projects that crossed the short list of 162 (now 164) waterways would be reviewed for harmful water impacts, putting the remaining waterways at risk.

Leading up to the 2015 election, the Trudeau government committed to restoring and modernizing the freshwater and environmental protections that the Harper government had so wrongly gutted.

The Trudeau government is reviewing the NWPA along with the Fisheries Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. In March, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities tabled recommendations that failed to recognize the importance of water. The first of 18 recommendations advised that protections be kept off of the 99 per cent of lakes and rivers and encouraged the federal government to abandon its responsibilities to protect waterways and communities’ right to navigate waterways.

In 2012, the former Harper government also exempted large pipelines and power lines projects from the NWPA. Under these changes, the Trudeau government gave the green light to the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, which crosses 1,300 waterways in Alberta and B.C. The Standing Committee recommended that Transport Canada be included in decision-making on environmental assessments for pipelines and power lines, yet it is unclear whether this will include all lakes and rivers.

The Trudeau government has a limited amount of time to respond to the recommendations. It can implement the recommendations and carry on Harper’s legacy, or it can deliver the real change it promised us by putting protections back on every lake and every river and working towards the bold visions to truly protect the world’s lakes and rivers.

Add your voice – and your local lake or river! – to a mass delivery to the Trudeau government to put protections back on every lake and every river. To join, send us:

1. Your name: ___________________________
2. Your postal code/city/town: ________________
3. The lakes and rivers in your community:

(Click the webpage at goo.gl/N1LMH6 to see if they are protected.)

4. A photo or hand-drawn picture of the lake or river (optional).

Mail: Return this form using the enclosed postage-paid envelope to: The Council of Canadians 300-251 Bank St., Ottawa, ON K2P 1X3

Online: Learn more online at canadians.org/EveryLakeEveryRiver

Why 99% of Lakes and Rivers Remain Unprotected in Canada
Emma Lui, Water Campaigner

Report: Every Lake, Every River: Restoring the Navigable Waters Protection Act. canadians.org/report-everylakeeveryriver

TAKE ACTION!
Protect #EveryLakeEveryRiver
Chapter
Action Updates

Council of Canadians chapters are active in 60 communities across Canada, protecting water and public health care and fighting for climate justice, fair trade and strengthened democracy. Chapter members are all volunteers who believe that by working together we all have a role to play in building a better Canada.

Chapters participate in #ClimateMarch2017

Council of Canadians chapters across the country participated in #ClimateMarch2017 to protect our right to clean air, water, land, healthy communities and a world at peace. The march was organized to “tell our Canadian political representatives that we expect them to do more: to reduce GHG emissions and curb climate change, to transition to a new clean and renewable energy economy that works for all, to respect and uphold Indigenous rights.” The events were organized in solidarity with the Peoples Climate March in Washington, DC and with immigrants, refugees, communities of colour and LGBTQ2I communities impacted by physical and political attacks and by the dislocation caused by global climate change.

North Shore talks electoral reform

Members of the Council’s North Shore chapter in Nova Scotia organized a public forum on electoral reform with MP Bill Casey. Despite promising to implement electoral reform before the next federal election, the Trudeau government has since backed down on its pledge. Forum attendees talked about ways to get the federal government to keep its promise. Although Trudeau failed to live up to his commitment in time for the October 2019 federal election, Council of Canadians chapters have not given up on the fight to see meaningful electoral reform.

Sudbury chapter questions Wynne

The Council of Canadians Sudbury chapter has written Ontario Premier Wynne to express its disappointment over her government’s new regulations on bottled water takings.

Sudbury chapter activist Glenn Murray wrote, “As you are working hard to gain favour with Ontario voters on almost the eve of the next election, the one thing your government continues to drop the ball on is protecting the absolutely most precious resource we have, water. You are putting this valuable resource at risk for the benefit of a well known greedy multinational... Plus, to top it off, you are adding to an already uncontrollable environmental situation with the saturation of our highways, byways, waterways, and landfills, with plastic, single use containers that the bottled water comes in.”

London chapter builds anti-pipeline snake

The Council of Canadians London chapter has sewn, built and created various banners, props and installations for protests over the years. But chapter members count their 30-foot anti pipeline snake as one of their most creative. The black snake was meant to represent the Line 9 pipeline, and has the words, “Enbridge: 800 spills so far, not worth the risk, protect our water, our land, our health. Stop line 9” stitched on its side. Recently the chapter held a “Make the Snake” workshop to restore and rebuild the eye-grabbing prop.

Cowichan Valley holds LNG forum

The Council of Canadians Cowichan Valley chapter held a public forum on the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry in late April to talk about impact the industry will have on B.C’s coastline and narrow ocean channels. Chapter activist Donna Cameron said there is strong concern about the danger of the terminal releasing warm chlorinated water into the long, narrow inlet. “This could be disastrous for local marine life,” she said. The discussion also focused on the reality of job numbers in the LNG industry, how many of the proposed terminals will actually ever go ahead, the fact that LNG is not a clean energy, and the vast amount of water needed and then contaminated to make LNG.

If you are interested in finding out more about Council of Canadians’ chapters please call 1-800-387-7177.
Time for a “New Perspective”

Welcome to the very first edition of the new Canadian Perspectives newsletter!

In an effort to dedicate a higher percentage of your generous donations to the campaign work happening from coast to coast to coast that helps make a better Canada possible, we are changing the format of Canadian Perspectives from a magazine to a newsletter. This change will also reduce our environmental footprint with a smaller, more focused print run twice a year. Council of Canadians supporters who provide their email addresses will now receive copies of Canadian Perspectives newsletter by email.

What won’t change is our commitment to provide you with all the recent updates and information about important social justice issues and what your donations are doing to help protect water and public health care and fight for climate justice, fair trade and strengthened democracy. We will let you know what the Council’s volunteer chapters are doing in communities across Canada, and ways you can take action in your own community.

All of these actions continue without a penny of corporate or government funding. Our campaign work is made possible by the generosity of like-minded people like you who believe social, economic and environmental justice is something we must all strive for. With your support, we organize major events in communities across Canada, garner daily media, hold conferences and speaking tours, produce educational factsheets and reports, and provide daily updates on our website at canadians.org and on social media.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

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