



Close to 500 people packed the room as Maude Barlow spoke in Port Elgin, Ontario in August as part of the Great Lakes Need Great Friends tour. The event was organized by Save Our Saugeen Shores.

On the Road with Maude Barlow

Dear friends,

What a summer and fall, and what a winter coming up! Over the summer and early fall I was truly “on the road.”

In July I was in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, for the First Ministers’ meeting where we held an alternative people’s summit on health care and staged a fabulous march with thousands of people. The health care accord runs out in 2014 and we are busy preparing for next year’s meeting, which will involve an all-out campaign to have the premiers resist Stephen Harper’s plan to drastically reduce the federal government’s share of health care funding.

I was in Saugeen Shores, Ontario, to support terrific local groups fighting to stop Bruce Power from burying its nuclear waste in deep geologic depositories only a kilometre away from Lake Huron. We had more than 400 people out to this public meeting.

I visited Fredericton and Moncton, New Brunswick, to support our chapters, First Nations communities and others in their campaign to stop seismic testing for fracking in more than 20 per cent of the province. More than 500 people came out to a public meeting in Moncton.

I went to Toronto, Ontario, for the founding of the powerful new union UNIFOR, which brings together 300,000 members of the former unions CAW and CEP. It was a wonderful weekend of celebration and solidarity and commitment to work together to defeat the Harper agenda.

I was in Regina, Saskatchewan, for a large public forum on the need to keep the city’s water in public hands just weeks before the municipal referendum on whether or

not to privatize the city’s water treatment system. The Harper government will only help pay for these kinds of upgrades if the municipalities opt for financing through public-private partnerships.

I travelled to Bern, Switzerland, to present the City of Bern and the University of Bern with “Blue Community” certificates as both took the pledge to promote water as a public trust, public service and human right. They are the first non-Canadian institutions to do this.

Next was New York City for the historic gathering of the International Women’s Earth and Climate Summit, where 100 women from around the world sent a message to governments calling for immediate action on climate change.

I was in Saint John, New Brunswick, for a high profile public forum and rally against the Energy East Pipeline during the corporate-sponsored Atlantic Canada Energy Summit; then Vancouver for the 2013 dynamic youth gathering Powershift, and finally California for a gathering of visionaries on the rights of nature.

In between all of this, I had the opportunity to visit many of your wonderful communities to talk about my new book *Blue Future*. Many thanks to all of you who came out!

In October, the Council of Canadians was in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, for our annual conference titled “Groundswell: Grassroots power in the age of extreme energy.” This exciting event will be followed by our Common Causes alternative summit to the Conservative Convention in Calgary.

As you can see, we continue to be involved in the major issues of our day

and the Council finds itself at the heart of the key struggles against the Harper government’s agenda.

I have never been more proud of us than when the Federal Court of Canada ruled last spring that there had indeed been electoral fraud in the last federal election and its most likely source was the database of the Conservative Party of Canada. The Council was proud to support the brave citizens who came forward to fight for all our rights.

But we need to keep up the fight. No government in Canada’s history has so profoundly changed the face of our country. Windfall tax cuts for corporations; the scapegoating of public servants; removing the federal role in health care; assaults on working people and unions; axing the Wheat Board; cuts to culture; gutting freshwater regulations; Kyoto abandoned; waging war on scientists; targeting refugees; softening Canada’s former stand on torture; trading with human rights abusers; tying foreign aid to the demands of our mining industry – these and other policies are changing Canada at home and in the eyes of the world.

It is more urgent than ever to have an independent people’s movement to speak out on these issues and others and assert the values we know most Canadians share. I look forward to working with you this coming year.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maude Barlow". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.