



Maude Barlow spoke with activists and members of the media when she visited the encampment in Rexton, New Brunswick (near Elsipogtog) in February. Maude also met with Elsipogtog Chief Aaron Sock to offer the Council of Canadians' support for blockade efforts to stop fracking.

## On the Road with **Maude Barlow**

Dear friends,

What a winter and spring so far! In all my activist life I have never experienced so many assaults on so many fronts to everything I hold dear. I am angry! Stephen Harper is determined to leave this country profoundly changed.

He has gutted environmental and fresh-water protections, closed down research stations, and fired the scientists who might be able to prove what folly that is.

He has set the stage to seriously erode the federal role in health care while giving his corporate friends and big oil companies unprecedented tax breaks.

He has fundamentally destroyed the purpose of foreign aid, which is now tied to the bottom-line profits of Canada's notorious mining industry.

He has taken the gloves off in his attack on those with a different point of view, aggressively auditing respected environmental groups and targeting the collective rights of working people.

And he is shameful in his attacks on democracy, using so-called electoral reform to cover the tracks of the Conservative Party of Canada after the Federal Court said the party's database was the likely source of the electoral fraud that took place in the last election.

But at the same time, I am thankful: thankful

for a movement not only alive and well, but working together to stop these assaults on our democratic rights. I am thankful for our wonderful hardworking staff, tireless chapter activists and dedicated board. I am thankful for strong unions and civil society organizations that have come together to protect one another and advance a progressive, forward-thinking agenda for this country.

Working together on common causes, we are mounting cross-sectoral campaigns that are making a difference. I have toured with CUPE President Paul Moist to fight for public health care and stood side-by-side with Unifor's Jerry Dias and PSAC's Robyn Benson to stand up for collective bargaining.

I have travelled the route of the proposed Energy East Pipeline, holding public meetings with Eriel Deranger of the Athabasca Fort Chipewyan First Nation, and joined the protest line with Elsipogtog's Chief Aaron Sock as his people stood up against fracking exploration on their territory.

I have worked with communities around the Great Lakes to assert our vision of the watershed as a lived Commons and public trust and sounded the alarm about the dangers of extreme energy to these magnificent waters in a new report called *Liquid Pipeline*.

Recent travels have also taken me to San Francisco to speak to visionary architects and landscapers creating "zero net water" and "zero net energy" buildings and communities. I travelled to Milan, Italy,

to speak to an economic justice conference for Italian officials; Istanbul, Turkey, to be part of a global strategy meeting on dealing with corporate investor-state rights; Washington to address allies at the Institute for Policy Studies; Montreal to serve on the jury of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal on the Canadian Mining Industry; and Porto Alegre, Brazil, to speak to a government conference about the need to keep water in public hands.

In all these places and in communities across this great country, I speak of the values of our movement and of the Council of Canadians: equality, justice, sustainability, democracy and inclusion. I am proud to be part of this great movement here in Canada and around the world and proud to represent you in my travels.

Recently my 11-year-old granddaughters, Maddie and Ellie, gave me a painting. It showed a foul-looking smokestack in the background and a beautiful green tree in the foreground. It said: "Without you, the world would be different."

Is that enough to keep me going?

You bet!

With hope and resolve,

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