

# Barlow attacks Atlantica Concept

By Kyle Buott



Atlantica is part of a corporate-driven scheme to further integrate Atlantic Canada's economy with the United States, with potentially disastrous results, warns Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

It was standing room only on June 13<sup>th</sup> as about 300 people gathered in the Scotia Bank Auditorium at Dalhousie University to hear Barlow and other panellists speak about the Atlantica concept being pushed by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies and the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce.

Barlow spoke about the threat posed to energy security in Atlantic Canada if Atlantica becomes a reality.

“Because of NAFTA’s proportionality clause, any energy resources sent to the United States are locked in at that level, forever,” said Barlow. If a major disaster were to hit Atlantic Canada, we would not be allowed to divert those resources for ourselves until the Americans’ demand had been sated, she continued.

She also mentioned the possible negative effects on the minimum wage, social programmes and the environment as the Atlantic Canadian economies become more integrated with the United States.

Joining Barlow on the panel were Scott Sinclair, a senior researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and author of the study “Atlantica: Myths and Realities” released in February, 2007, and Marcela Orozco, a researcher with the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade.

Sinclair started the evening’s discussion with an overview of Atlantica, and accused the concept of being part of an “elite-centered decision-making” process that leaves social groups, unions and environmentalists on the sidelines.

Orozco drew direct parallels between Atlantica and the broader topic of neo-liberalism, or the Washington Consensus as she called it, and how it has affected the lives of millions of people in Mexico.

Barlow, author or co-author of 15 books, including her most recent “Too Close For Comfort – Canada’s future within Fortress North America” which discusses the proposed integration of the North American economies under an agreement called the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), attempted to link the Atlantica concept to a broader plan to weaken social protections and environmental regulations throughout North America.

**To find out what you can do to challenge Atlantica and the SPP, visit [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org) or call 1-800-387-7177.**

“Atlantica is part of the model that is destroying the world,” said Barlow about neo-liberalism and corporate-driven free trade policies like NAFTA and the SPP.

Last year, proponents of Atlantica held a conference in Saint John, New Brunswick, discussing how to make Atlantica happen. This year, the conference was held in Halifax and started the day after the panel discussion against Atlantica. The conference was called “Atlantica 2007 – Charting the Course” and was held at the World Trade and Convention Centre.

Supporters of the Atlantica concept seek to create a free trade zone encompassing Atlantica Canada, but not Labrador, parts of Quebec, and the north-eastern United States.

The idea includes creating a super port in Halifax to be used as a conduit for Asian goods via the Suez Canal and destined for the United States’ market.

It also seeks to create energy corridors that will take raw materials and energy resources directly to the United States for refining.



**To find out what you can do to challenge Atlantica and the SPP, visit [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org) or call 1-800-387-7177.**