

# 1 THE MYTH OF ATLANTICA More than an economic union

Atlantica is the proposed economic integration of the Maritime provinces, Newfoundland (but not Labrador), parts of Quebec, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and upstate New York. This integration of Eastern Canada and the North-Eastern United States would erase border restrictions and regulations, creating a massive transportation corridor to send Asian goods and energy resources to the United States. Atlantica is a part of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) agenda, aimed at creating a “free market” between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Proposed and supported by big business leaders and the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS), Atlantica uses the Atlantic Gateway proposal as a way to facilitate trade. Significant infrastructure projects form part of the plan including: creating a mega shipping port in Halifax that connects with a high-volume transportation corridor through the Maritimes and into the United States, and increasing exports of unrefined oil and gas south of the Canadian border.

## Undemocratic process

Atlantica meetings include government and big business representatives in Canada and the United States, but exclude unions, environmental groups and civil society organizations like the Council of Canadians. Atlantica is about big business leaders making decisions that affect the lives of Atlantic Canadians. While there are bound to be economic gains for some – namely large corporations that would be moving goods, the trucking industry, and businesses around Halifax located near the proposed ports – there are also serious social and environmental impacts. Proponents of Atlantica are calling for scrapping the minimum wage, denying the ability of workers to organize, and reducing the role and influence of unions.

## Some provincial governments forging ahead

According to the *New Brunswick Telegraph Journal*, Atlantica has \$500 million earmarked in transportation and energy investments on both sides of the border over the next seven years with little input from the public about the impacts of such a massive project. In fact, it is the government of Maine that is leading a study looking at the proposed Atlantic transporta-

tion corridor, which would support the Atlantica initiative, with government representatives from Quebec, PEI, New Brunswick, Ontario and Nova Scotia participating in study committees. Transport Canada is also participating as a non-voting member. In a Ministerial Declaration from a trilateral transportation meeting held in April 2007, government officials from Canada, the United States and Mexico confirmed that they will be using the SPP to further the Atlantica agenda even though the SPP has never been outlined, discussed or voted on by the Canadian public.

## Stephen Harper supports Atlantic Gateway

In a recent speech at the International Conference on Gateways and Corridors, Prime Minister Stephen Harper confirmed his support for closer economic ties and deeper integration with the United States. He pledged to use Canadian tax dollars to build mega shipping ports and pipelines to send Canadian resources south saying: “it amounts to a coast-to-coast overhaul of the foundations of our economy.” He highlighted the Conservative 2007 budget that spends nearly \$9 billion on infrastructure projects including “gateways and border crossings” and confirmed that “in the longer term, we intend to develop an Atlantic gateway in the East Coast.”

## Say no to Atlantica

The big business agenda of Atlantica will have a negative impact on Atlantic Canadians and is proceeding without public input. You can make a difference by writing to your local MP or community newspaper and telling them why you oppose this proposal.



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.