

IN THE NEWS

By Dylan Penner

The Council of Canadians has made headlines across the country in recent months protesting further development of the tar sands, opposing “commercialization of water” through the Great Lakes Compact, and calling for the return of Guantanamo Bay prisoner Omar Khadr to Canada. Here are some excerpts of our recent coverage:

OILSANDS DEVELOPMENT PROTESTED

About a dozen people with placards reading “Tar Sands = Climate Change” and “Get informed Saskatchewan” urged the provincial government to stop issuing exploratory permits for the oilsands until further study is done.

The event, organized by the Regina chapter of the Council of Canadians, coincided with the province’s August sale of oil and natural gas rights, which offered oilsands rights for only the second time.

The groups gathered Monday said assurances from the government (of sustainable development) aren’t enough.

“Most tar sands will still need water, will still need energy,” said Jim Elliot, chair of the Regina chapter of the Council of Canadians.

“I don’t know how much different it will be. I think we need to have, again, a full assessment of that well before we actually go ahead and make a decision on going ahead with it.”

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COUNCIL OF CANADIANS ASKING COUNTY COUNCIL TO OPPOSE INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE AGREEMENT

The local chapter of the Council of Canadians is asking county council today to oppose Ontario joining an internal trade agreement.



Jamian Logue

The media was out in full force as staff from the national office of the Council of Canadians, posing as John “Bush” McCain and Stephen “I love NAFTA” Harper, join the NAFTAsaurus for a media stunt in June.

“We want to prevent Ontario signing an agreement similar to the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA),” said Roy Brady, Peterborough/Kawartha chapter chairman.

“The concern is the negative impact of internal trade agreements on the ability of municipal governments to legislate and serve their citizens – particularly the existing TILMA agreement.”

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PROTESTERS WANT KHADR TRIED HERE; HUNDREDS EXPECTED AT T.O. RALLY

Several Canadian social justice groups sent a clear message to Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday: Bring Omar Khadr back to Canada.

The press conference yesterday organized by the Canadian Peace Alliance is a lead-up to a march today across from the U.S. consulate on University Ave. where hundreds are expected to protest the Toronto-born Khadr’s detainment at Guantanamo Bay.

“Our government places more value on its relationship with Washington than it does on human rights,” Council of Canadians researcher Stuart Trew said.

Reprinted with permission of The Toronto Sun, July 26, 2008.

WATER PACT MAY HARM CANADIANS – LAWYER

A pact designed to preserve the Great Lakes is in reality a “slippery slope” that threatens severe harm to the world’s largest body of fresh water, a top U.S. environmental lawyer warned Canadians yesterday.

“In effect, a precedent is being set in that it allows for the commercialization of water. You are privatizing it,” said Michigan lawyer James Olson, of an agreement among eight Great Lakes states now before the U.S. Congress and linked to Ontario and Quebec through a side agreement.

Among other concerns, Olson criticizes a specific exemption in the Great Lakes Compact allowing water to be removed from the system by private industry as long as it’s not “bulk diversion” – in other words, restricting it to a container no more than 20 litres in Canada or 5.7 gallons in the United States, with no limit on the number of containers an enterprise such as water bottling can sell.

The agreement “can do great public harm, including to Canadians,” Olson said ... Olson is an ally of the Ottawa-based Council of Canadians in opposing the agreement.

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Editors note: The Great Lakes Compact was passed by U.S. Congress in September.

Dylan Penner is the Media Officer for the Council of Canadians.