



the committee began the in-depth study in June.

The Liberal Party is also looking at creating a water minister position to work with the provinces on federal water legislation.

Scarpaleggia's proposals would be a step forward in eliminating interbasin transfers and addressing water use concerns in the tar sands. However, they do not go far enough. The Liberal Party does not address the impacts of water privatization on Canada's drinking water and continues to oppose the right to water on the false assumption that endorsing it would leave Canada's water open to bulk exports.

However, Scarpaleggia contends that a water minister under a Liberal government would be given the mandate to determine how to recognize water as an

international human right in a way that safeguards Canadians' ownership of this resource.

## BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

The Bloc Québécois has long called for a federal water policy resembling the one adopted by Quebec in 2002. The Quebec water policy has many positive elements, but does not prevent private sector involvement in municipal water services, and fails to recognize water as a human right.

Last spring, the Bloc Québécois introduced a motion to the Standing Committee on International Trade that recommended the government quickly begin talks with its American and Mexican counterparts to exclude water from the scope of NAFTA. The motion passed in June 2007 with support from all of the parties except the Conservatives.

Unfortunately, to date the Conservative government has not begun talks to exclude water from NAFTA.

Canadians have waited far too long for a national water policy. With growing water shortages, increasing water contamination and the looming threat of bulk water exports, the Canadian public is anxious to see a strategy to protect Canada's water. An April 2008 survey conducted by Environics for the Council of Canadians demonstrates that 89 per cent of Canadians want a national water policy that would ban bulk water exports and recognize water as a human right.

It is time for our government to honour this demand.

**Meera Karunanathan is the National Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.**

## WE MADE A SPLASH ON WORLD WATER DAY

**A**cross Canada and around the world, people took action again this year to mark World Water Day. Celebrated annually on March 22, the day serves as an occasion to highlight local, national and global water justice issues. For World Water Day 2008, Council of Canadians chapters organized events to add their voice to the global movement to protect water as a shared public resource and as a human right. In Ottawa, the Council joined up with CUPE, Oxfam Canada, the Polaris Institute and other activists to march from the Human Rights Monument to Parliament Hill carrying a message of "Water for People, Not for Profit!" The march culminated with the delivery of a letter to John Baird, Minister of the Environment,

outlining the coalition's call for the recognition of the right to water, an end to water privatization, a ban on bulk water exports, and the government's commitment to develop a comprehensive and updated national water policy.

The coalition also launched a new online action tool that allows the public to add their voice to the call for water justice. Visit [www.righttowater.ca](http://www.righttowater.ca) and with just a few clicks, you can send a message to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and to a member of Parliament calling on them to support the right to water.

**Sonia Giovannina Vani**



*Sonia Giovannina Vani*



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**Volunteers with OXFAM Canada sport some fun balloon hats at a public rally on Parliament Hill in March for World Water Day.**

**Council of Canadians' activists joined with representatives from CUPE, Oxfam Canada, the Polaris Institute and concerned citizens for a rally on Parliament Hill in March to call on the government to protect water as a shared public resource and human right.**