

IN THE NEWS

The Council of Canadians has made headlines over the past few months pushing the Canadian government for recognition of the Right to Water, questioning Prime Minister Harper's mandate in New Orleans at the most recent Security and Prosperity Partnership summit, and criticizing the Harper government's hands-off approach to protecting public health care from the intrusion of private clinics.

Here are excerpts of some of our recent coverage:

UN MEETING REJECTS RECOGNITION OF WATER AS BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

The federal government can declare victory after a United Nations meeting rejected calls to recognize water as a basic human right.

Instead, a special resolution proposed by Germany and Spain at the UN human rights council was stripped of references that recognized access to water as a human right.

Canadian officials said last week the government wanted to ensure that the meeting's outcome reflected the fact that access to water was not formally recognized as a human right in international law. However, a social advocacy group said that position was designed to protect the right to sell water under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"Clearly [the Harper government is] happy with the status quo: They're not going to be an agent for change, and they're not going to support the right to water," said Maude Barlow, chairwoman of the Council of Canadians. "About every eight seconds, a child somewhere in the world is dying from dirty water, and it's just shocking that our government has taken this position."

Reprinted with permission from The Ottawa Citizen, March 26, 2008



Atlantic Regional Organizer Angela Giles is interviewed by a local news crew at a rally outside Scotia Surgery Inc.

Tony Tracy

GUARD RESOURCES, OTTAWA URGED: POLL FINDS CANADIANS WANT POLICIES TO GUARANTEE ENERGY AND WATER SUPPLY, ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

Canadians overwhelmingly sent a message to Prime Minister Stephen Harper to ease up on integration with U.S. policy and protect the country's water, energy and public regulations, according to the results of a recent poll.

The poll comes as Harper, U.S. President George W. Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderon prepare for next week's leaders' summit in New Orleans on the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) of North America.

To be released today by the Council of Canadians, the poll was conducted April 7 to 10 by Environics and obtained by the *Toronto Star*.

The council opposes the secrecy surrounding the high-level talks.

In fact, probably the best way for Canadians to learn about what's on the table in negotiations – which cover everything from greater energy integration to harmonization of health and product regulations – is to research

U.S. government websites. "It's been four years since the launch of the SPP and while corporations have been given a seat at the negotiating table, the Canadian government has never asked the public how they feel about it," said council chair Maude Barlow.

Reprinted with permission from The Toronto Star, April 15, 2008

GROUP DECRIES USE OF PRIVATE HEALTH CLINICS

A group of protesters gathered in Dartmouth on Saturday to praise public health care and denounce a stopgap arrangement between the provincial government and a private medical clinic on Acadia Street.

About 20 demonstrators assembled in an empty parking lot across the road from the Scotia Surgery Inc. building and criticized a Health Department-approved contract, signed earlier this year, between the Capital district health authority and owners of the for-profit clinic.

The government is using the site to help ease the backlog affecting Nova Scotians in need of orthopedic surgery.

At the protest, organized by the Council of Canadians during a national day of action in support of Canada's medicare system, council vice-chairman Leo Broderick said the system is under threat. "It is shameful," he said.

Mr. Broderick said the provincial and federal governments should do more to defend public health care.

"We are calling on Nova Scotians and all Canadians to begin a major fight ... to reclaim Canada's medicare system," he said.

Reprinted with permission of the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, May 4, 2008