



E-Newsletter, April 2008

86% say Harper has no mandate in New Orleans for secretive trilateral agreement

Council of Canadians representatives will be making their way to New Orleans in a few days to bring the message that Canadians do not want the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) – and we have the numbers to prove it.

On the eve of the fourth annual leaders' summit on the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the Council of Canadians released the results of a public opinion poll that shows an overwhelming majority of Canadians disagree with the main policy objectives of the secretive trilateral agreement, and that 86% want a public debate and vote on the deal in Parliament. Environics Research Group surveyed 1,007 Canadians from April 7 to 10 on whether or not they agreed with the SPP priorities of regulatory harmonization, energy integration, closer security links with the United States and bulk water exports. The results clearly show that Prime Minister Harper has no democratic mandate from Canadians for pursuing continental integration with his Mexican and American counterparts.

Council of Canadians' chairperson Maude Barlow will be taking the message of widespread Canadian opposition to the SPP to New Orleans next week, where she will be participating in a People's Summit, which has been timed to coincide with the official leader's summit from April 21-22. The People's Summit is being organized by grassroots groups in New Orleans, who have invited international civil society organizations to discuss the SPP and the likely impact of its corporate goals on North American communities.



"Caution NAFTA at work" Photo courtesy of the People's Summit

For regular updates on the SPP Summit April 21 and 22, and to see the full results of our Environics poll, click [here](#).

To read more about the People's Summit, click [here](#).

Here's more about what's new at the Council of Canadians:

- [Canada takes a shameful position on the Right to Water](#)
- [Even magnifying glasses can't reveal inter-provincial trade barriers](#)
- [Victory! Grassroots people power protects park](#)
- [Victory! Nova Scotians win support to hold onto uranium mining moratorium](#)

- **Victory! Industry Minister blocks sale of Canadian space company to U.S. following public protest**
-

Canada takes a shameful position on the Right to Water

In March, the Harper government shamelessly blocked a resolution tabled by Germany and Spain at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva that called for water and sanitation to be recognized as a human right.

Arguing that declaring water as a human right could force the Canadian government to export water to the United States, Canada put forward numerous objections, which resulted in a watered-down version of the original resolution being adopted.

Canada and the United States are the only two countries to go on record at the United Nations in opposing the right to water. According to news reports, international UN observers said Canada's role was instrumental in ensuring the failure of the motion.

The Council of Canadians joined with the Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) to point out the tabled resolution focused on water protection and access at the local and national levels, and would not affect any transboundary water issues.

"Recognizing water as a human right is vital to ensuring that governments address the reality of more than a billion people who are currently without access to clean water," said Council of Canadians' chairperson Maude Barlow "It is shocking that Canada would work with the United States to oppose this fundamental right."

For more information about the Council of Canadians' work on the Right to Water visit www.righttowater.ca. To read our recent media releases on this topic, visit <http://www.canadians.org/media/water/index.html>

Even magnifying glasses can't reveal inter-provincial trade barriers

Members of the Council of Canadians' Golden, BC chapter joined other activists to carefully examine the British Columbia-Alberta border, searching for impediments to trade.

Armed with magnifying glasses, the cross-border trade searchers were unable to spot any barriers to the flow of goods. Their outing coincided with the first anniversary of the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) between BC and Alberta. It was signed in April 2006 by the premiers of Alberta and B.C., without public consultation or legislative debate. The agreement allows corporations and individuals to challenge any provincial or municipal government measure they feel "restricts or impairs" their investment (i.e. their profits). Even measures designed to protect the environment and public health can be brought to an unelected TILMA dispute panel that would have the authority to impose penalties as high as \$5 million.



After failing to find any significant trade barriers to justify an agreement that undermines local democracy, the group concluded that TILMA had been sold to the people of both provinces as a solution to a problem that does not exist.

Click here to see more photos of the trade barrier border search. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stoptilma/>

For more information and analysis on TILMA, including information about other provinces' involvement, click [here](#).

Victory! Grassroots people power protects park

People power prevailed recently when the B.C. government announced it has rejected a controversial proposal by an independent electricity project developer to run a power line through Pinecone Burke Provincial Park, located near Coquitlam. Council of Canadians' activists and members joined more than 1,000 people (after an earlier meeting in a smaller venue had to be shut down by the fire marshal due to over capacity) to express their opposition to a proposal by Run of the River Power to connect its proposed series of Run of the River hydro projects in the Upper Pitt River Valley to BC Hydro's provincial electricity grid.

Concerns have been raised about the environmental damage Run of the River projects will inflict on some of the most beautiful parts of British Columbia as waterways are developed and altered, and huge swaths are cut through local lands to make way for hydro-electric power lines. These private companies are also expected to raise the price of electricity for businesses and consumers.

The Council of Canadians has worked closely with many groups on this issue including the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, BC Citizens for Public Power, and COPE 378. We continue to encourage people to write letters, contact their elected representatives, and host meetings to help raise awareness about the impacts of these projects.

We will continue to focus on this issue and work on a provincial strategy to bring the opposition to private power to the front pages of the paper and top news stories. There are still hundreds of applications in for consideration to further Run of the River projects, and we will be there to fight them.

For more information about the Council of Canadians' energy campaign click [here](#).

Victory! Local council agrees to ask province to uphold uranium mining moratorium

Uranium mining is an issue that is raising concerns across the country as interest in nuclear power continues to mushroom.

Nova Scotia is currently the only province or territory to have a moratorium on uranium mining, which has been in place since 1982. This moratorium is now under threat as Tripple Uranium Mining Resources Inc, has found large-scale uranium deposits in Wentworth and in Millet Brook, near New Ross. The company has approached the province to lift the moratorium and according to news reports, Premier Rodney MacDonald has indicated his intention to review the ban.

Atlantic chapter activists have taken their concerns to local government officials, and recently won the support of Chester Municipal Council, which passed a unanimous motion to ask the Nova Scotia government for a permanent legislated moratorium on uranium exploration and mining. Thanks to the efforts of chapter activists and concerned citizens, the local message of opposition will be moved into the provincial forum.

Take action!

To add your voice to the call on the Nova Scotia government to continue the moratorium on uranium mining click [here](#).

Victory! Industry Minister blocks sale of Canadian space company to U.S. following public protest

Earlier this month, Council of Canadians' activists joined citizens and groups across the country calling on the federal government to block the proposed \$1.3-billion sale of the space technology division of Vancouver-based MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates (MDA) to a U.S. defence firm.

In light of strong protests against the sale that argue it would impact Canadian sovereignty and would result in the loss of significant publicly-funded technology and research, the federal government backed away from the deal, stating its intention to reject it unless the U.S. company could convince it otherwise. According to news reports, Industry Minister Jim Prentice said he did not think the deal would benefit Canadian citizens.

MDA wanted to sell its space division, which includes the Canadarm and the Radarsat-2 satellite, to Alliant, a major U.S. defence contractor. Alliant now has until early May to get the federal government to reverse its position. This is unlikely to happen given the strong public opposition to the deal.

To read more the Council of Canadians' action alert on this issue click [here](#).

Join the Council of Canadians today!

Founded in 1985 by a handful of citizens including Farley Mowat, Pierre Berton and Margaret Atwood, the Council of Canadians is Canada's pre-eminent public watchdog organization. The Council receives no money from government, corporations or any political party. To preserve our complete independence, we ensure that almost all our revenue comes from generous individuals like you. **Join the Council today**, and help us prove that a better Canada is possible.