

Take charge! Send a mitten to Prime Minister Harper on February 2nd

Canada is a cold country and we need energy to stay warm and to heat our homes.

But Canada's lack of a national energy strategy is like sending someone out into the cold with only one mitten – one hand stays warm while the other freezes.

Without west-to-east pipelines, we do not have a way to get energy to all parts of the country. All Canadians deal with the impacts of an energy market focused on sending the majority of our oil and gas south to the energy-hungry United States, no matter what the environmental or societal cost to Canadians. Canada's "free market" approach to energy policy and its increasing integration with the United States under the **Security and Prosperity Partnership** have put multi-billion-dollar oil and gas companies in control of our energy future.

Take action!

Visit www.canadians.org/energy/action and **send a mitten** to Prime Minister Stephen Harper or your local Member of Parliament and tell them that you support a Canadian Energy Strategy that will give Canadians secure energy supplies, guaranteed access to energy reserves in times of need, and strong policies that protect our environment and focus on finding alternative, less harmful energy solutions.

Thousands of mittens from Canadians across the country will send a strong message that politicians cannot let corporations and the market set the agenda, focusing on big business needs, while ignoring the energy security needs of Canadians.

Visit our website at www.canadians.org, to read more about our mitten action, and find out what you can do to participate in the Council's *Take Charge!* Day of Action to Demand a National Energy Strategy.



Meanwhile, here's what's new at the Council of Canadians:

- **Canada's best kept secret revealed**
- **Cloned food issue gets to the meat of SPP's regulatory matter**
- **New chapter in Golden, BC takes on TILMA**
- **Take action for the right to water**
- **Join the Council of Canadians today!**

Canada's best kept secret revealed

The Council of Canadians has just launched a new campaign to spread the message that public health care offers Canadian businesses and citizens a true competitive advantage. Best Kept Secret: Canada's Health Care Competitive Advantage will reach out to small and medium-sized businesses, community groups and other local organizations to encourage them to fight to protect and enhance public health care in Canada.

Representatives from more than 30 Council of Canadians chapters and coalition partners have selected public speakers who will be participating in training sessions in Kelowna, Vancouver, Nanaimo, St. Catharines, Saint John, Moncton, Charlottetown, Tatamagouche, Halifax, St. John's, Edmonton and Calgary over the next few months. Across the country, presenters will be equipped with a specialized speech, PowerPoint presentation and an extensive resource guide that they can then take into their communities.

The 30-minute presentations have been designed to generate discussion, and to provide clear evidence not only on the economic advantages of public health care, but also about the benefits of public insurance and non-profit delivery of health care services. We will also provide evidence to debunk myths spouted by people like Canadian Medical Association President Dr. Brian Day, who are pushing for health care privatization.

Do you want to reveal Canada's best kept secret in your community? Contact the **regional office** closest to you, and we'll help you get involved.

Cloned food issue gets to the meat of SPP's regulatory matter

Vegetarians will probably shrug their shoulders but Canadian meat eaters may soon have another reason to hate the SPP: cloned meat.

A new U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report claims that meat and milk from cloned animals is as safe as that from "normal" animals, according to a January 15 CTV news story. It's so safe, in fact, that there is no reason to label these cloned food products as such.

Meat and milk from cattle, swine and goat clones are "as safe as food we eat every day," says the FDA. The CTV story adds that, "when the market is ready for cloned meat and dairy, it will not require special labeling or other additional measures, 'because food derived from these sources is no different from food derived from conventionally bred animals.'"

The U.S. report comes a week after the European Food Safety Authority also approved the safety of meat and milk from cloned animals.

"As for Canada, a spokesman for Health Canada said there are currently no foods from cloned animals approved for sale in Canada," reported CTV. But Agence France Press reported on January 4 that, "Regulators in countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Japan and New Zealand, which already have livestock clones, although they rarely enter the food chain, would be closely watching the FDA decision." Furthermore, as reported by Rick Weiss of the *Washington Post*, "The safety of products from cloned animals is still under study in Canada, according to Health Canada's website."

Unfortunately, there may be no reason for Canada to continue its study considering the extent of its collaboration with the United States on a common regulatory approach to food and consumer product safety.

"Canada is also committed to working with the United States and Mexico through the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, to strengthen our existing cooperation to identify and stop unsafe food and consumer products before they enter our shared continent," writes Health Canada in its proposed new Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan. "We will collaborate to ensure the compatibility of our related regulatory and inspection regimes."

Health Canada has opened up its food safety plan for public consultation. Click **here** to read a full discussion paper. And visit our **Integrate This** website at www.IntegrateThis.ca to read more about how the SPP is affecting our day-to-day lives, with an impact on everything from **fuel emissions** to **health and safety standards**.

New chapter in Golden, BC takes on TILMA

On an average Wednesday night in Golden BC, an extraordinary meeting took place. On January 16, close to 30 residents of Golden gathered at the central hub of all things hip, Jita's Café, to form the Golden chapter of the Council

of Canadians. Becoming the 32nd chapter in the BC/Yukon region, members spoke about what drew them to the Council of Canadians, the need for an activist group in the community and their hopes for lots of great actions and positive social change in the future. People spoke about their concerns with **TILMA** and the impact it might have on municipal strategies to protect the community, the privatization of hydroelectric power generation through run-of-the-river licences, and the creep of deep integration by the **Security and Prosperity Partnership**.

Chapter contact Trevor Hamre was first inspired by the film *Democracy a la Maude*, and when he heard that Maude would be at the Council's **AGM in Kelowna** in October, he said "well, that's only five hours away!" So he convinced two other friends, Kuljit and Tyler, to make the trip for the weekend. Returning inspired, Trevor wrote an extensive report on the AGM for a local news magazine. But not satisfied there, he and Kuljit took it upon themselves to start up a chapter.

No shortage of work to be done, the chapter has already planned their event for the **Take Charge** day of action on February 2nd.

Visit our website at www.canadians.org/chapters to find the Council chapter nearest to you, or contact the closest regional office to find out about starting a new one.

Take action for the right to water

Who owns water?

Should corporations be permitted to rake in huge profits while exploiting the billions of people around the world who have no access to clean water or sanitation? Or should water be protected as a public resource, available for free to everyone who needs it?

We believe that water is a human right that should never be sold for profit. It's a public trust – part of the commons – and we want to see it protected and preserved for future generations.

We must act quickly. Over 1.2 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water and this number is rising, while another 4 billion lack adequate sanitation services.

If you believe that the solution to the world water crisis should be based on principles of justice, equality and human rights, **join the Right to Water campaign today**. You'll be joining thousands of activists from around the world in a growing movement for water justice.

Visit www.RightToWater.ca to sign our petition to Prime Minister Harper, demanding that the Canadian government support the right to water at the United Nations. Help us send as many letters as possible by World Water Day on March 22, 2008. And to learn more about the global movement to protect the world's water, visit www.canadians.org/water and www.blueplanetproject.net.

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 at www.canadians.org/join, and help us prove that a better Canada is possible.