

E-Newsletter, July 2008



Stop freshwater lakes from becoming toxic waste dumps

The Council of Canadians has joined with environmental, First Nations and social justice organizations to stop the Harper government's plan to allow mining companies to use Canadian freshwater lakes as dumping grounds for toxic mine wastes.

Although it is illegal under the federal Fisheries Act to dump toxic material into fish-habitated waters, mining companies have been given a loophole under the government-amended Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (MMER). The federal government is now able to reclassify lakes and other freshwater bodies as "tailing impoundment areas" and can permit mining companies to dump toxic wastes there, destroying the natural habitat forever.

Environment Canada recently announced that under the MMER at least 11 mines in Canada are seeking permission to destroy healthy natural water bodies with their mine waste. Eight of these mining projects are being considered in 2008. The lakes include prime fishing areas and natural watersheds from B.C. to Newfoundland.

The Council of Canadians is calling on the federal government to require mining companies to use existing technologies for managing mine waste, or to invest in new technologies that do not result in the pollution of local watersheds.

Allowing mining companies to use lakes as waste dump sites amounts to a massive subsidy to the mining industry at the expense of publicly owned fresh water resources. The mining industry made a net profit of more than \$80 billion in North America in 2007. After the companies' profits are made, it will be the surrounding communities that will be left with the effects of the damage. Once toxic mine wastes are added to the water, the environmental damage cannot be undone.

"Allowing a lake to be turned into a dump site for a private company is nothing short of privatizing a public resource that is essential to life. Contaminating a water body will have devastating consequences on entire watersheds at a time when the world is dealing with a fresh water crisis," says Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

For more information about this issue, or to take action by sending a letter to Environment Minister John Baird, please go [here](#).

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

- **WIN! War resisters find support from majority of Parliament: resisters still face deportation**
- **One man's mission to raise awareness about the SPP**
- **Join the Council of Canadians today!**

WIN! War resisters find support from majority of Parliament: resisters still face deportation

Supporters of U.S. war resisters claimed victory last month when, by a vote of 137 to 110, federal Opposition parties in the House of Commons adopted a recommendation that, if implemented, would make it possible for U.S. Iraq War resisters to obtain permanent resident status in Canada.

The recommendation was adopted by a majority of Members of Parliament from the Liberal, Bloc Québécois, and New Democratic parties, while Conservative MPs voted against the motion.

The victory was short-lived, however, as U.S. army deserter Robin Long was deported back to his army base in Fort Knox, Kentucky on July 15, making him the first resister to the U.S. war effort in Iraq to be sent out of Canada. The 25-year-old was unable to sway a Canadian court of the danger he faced if he was forced to return to the United States.

Council of Canadians chapter activist and Board member Bob Ages spoke with *The Globe and Mail* about the issues saying, "I was just shocked at some things in (the) ruling. It just flies in the face of everything that we and every Canadian know about the reality of what is going on... (Mr. Long's deportation would be a) terrible precedent for Canada, especially given our history of providing sanctuary for war resisters, over 100,000 draft dodgers and deserters during the Vietnam era... This will be the first time Canada played gendarme to the American military."

Many Council members and chapters have joined the campaign to ensure that U.S. war resisters seeking refuge from militarism and an illegal war can stay safely in Canada.

While the vote has been characterized as a "non-binding resolution" of the House of Commons, the Council of Canadians believes it is incumbent on the Harper government to listen to the democratic will of MPs and take action on the issue.

For more information about the Council of Canadians' support for the War Resister campaign go [here](#).

One man's mission to raise awareness about the SPP

Don Parker has travelled many kilometres to raise awareness.

Concerned about the lack of information the general public has received about the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) and the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), Mr. Parker recently contacted the Council of Canadians and purchased 3,000 copies of the Council's recent report *Not Counting Canadians: The Security and Prosperity Partnership and public opinion*. Since May he has been visiting municipal and school board offices near his Toronto home to deliver copies of the report. He believes that raising public awareness is key to effecting change.

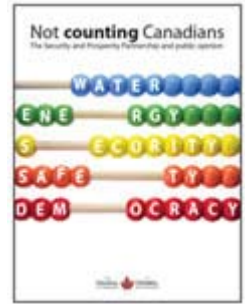
"If we want Canada to remain Canadian, we must learn more," he explains. "There have been seminars involving university students from (Mexico, Canada and the United States) who have been meeting together to learn how to think North American? If we are to stop this slippery slide down (...), we must do it from an informed basis."

Mr. Parker, who is a writer for the independent *Dialogue Magazine*, and very active Council supporter and member, is particularly concerned about making sure youth also start to think about issues affecting Canada. He has spoken with school board representatives about getting Council of Canadians' material into high school lesson plans. He also regularly delivers copies of the Council's magazine, *Canadian Perspectives*, around his community.

Mr. Parker encourages others to get involved and take action by writing letters and making phone calls to Members of Parliament and provincial politicians, writing letters to the editor of local newspapers, and forming discussion groups to plan actions. "I encourage people to join the Council of Canadians and support them, bearing in mind that membership alone is not nearly enough; there must be positive action," he says.

To read the report *Not Counting Canadians: The Security and Prosperity Partnership and public opinion* go [here](#).

To read the latest issue of *Canadian Perspectives* go [here](#).



Go [here](#) to read more about how Canadians feel about deeper integration through the SPP



Go [here](#) to read the latest issue of *Canadian Perspectives*

Join the Council of Canadians today!

The strength of the Council is in its membership. The Council does not accept funding from corporations or from governments, so membership donations are vital to our activities. We work with community groups, seniors, students, unions and other organizations across the country to promote progressive policies on public health care, fair trade, clean water and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians. **Join the Council today**, and help us prove that a better Canada is possible.