



THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS



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John McCain comes to Ottawa to praise NAFTA – protestors tell him to renegotiate the trade deal

U.S. Republican presidential candidate John McCain was in Ottawa last week to sing the praises of NAFTA and call for increased integration between the United States and Canada.

The Council of Canadians was there to let McCain know that NAFTA has not been a good deal for Canada and should be renegotiated, or even better, scrapped altogether.

McCain spoke at an exclusive event at the invitation of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE). While Prime Minister Stephen Harper wasn't in attendance, several Conservative MPs showed the government's strong support for the Republican agenda, which includes even stronger ties with the U.S. economy at the price of Canadian autonomy over our water and energy resources and public programs like health care. Deeper continental integration is planned through NAFTA and the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which has been referred to as "NAFTA-plus."

While John McCain met inside with the business elite, Council of Canadians' members and staff joined with peace groups, the Raging Grannies and other social justice organizations to hold a mock press conference outside featuring "John Bush-McCain," "Stephen 'I give away Canadian resources and jobs' Harper," and NAFTA-saurus, a large dinosaur representing the fossilized free trade agreement.

Council of Canadians' chairperson Maude Barlow spoke at the event to let people know the dangers of these trade agreements. "NAFTA has not been a good deal for Canadians, and the Security and Prosperity Partnership is not a good deal for Canadians," she told the large crowd.



Maude Barlow, "John Bush-McCain," "Stephen 'I give away Canadian resources and jobs' Harper," and NAFTA-saurus

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

- **Communities fight to ban uranium mining and exploration**
- **Council of Canadians front and centre in bottled water fights**
- **Maude Barlow wins prestigious environmental award; protests award sponsor**
- **Win! Yukon rejects TILMA**
- **Join the Council of Canadians today**

Communities fight to ban uranium mining and exploration

As provincial governments like Saskatchewan and Ontario roll out plans for new nuclear power plants, uranium mining corporations are looking to stake claims in communities across the country to harvest the uranium needed for production.

Until recently, Nova Scotia was the only province in Canada with a moratorium on uranium mining and exploration. (British Columbia and the Nunatsiavut of Labrador just banned uranium mining.) Communities in Ontario are now pushing that provincial government to enact a ban.

The Council of Canadians strongly opposes uranium mining, and arguments suggesting it is a green energy. Uranium is a non-renewable resource that is used for nuclear energy, nuclear weapons, and depleted uranium munitions. A miniscule amount of uranium is needed to produce medical isotopes.

When mined, uranium can leak into groundwater, contaminating water sources. The moment it is exposed to the air, it releases radon (a known carcinogen) in the form of a gas, exposing everything around it to toxins. These effects last much longer than any uranium mine; radiation will be emitted from uranium waste for thousands of years. There are no sustainable disposal methods for uranium and no scientific studies that show mining it is safe.

To see our recent action alerts on this issue, click [here](#).

Council of Canadians front and centre in bottled water fights

Across the country, Council of Canadians' activists are visiting their municipal councils and local



school boards to say that bottled water is an unnecessary drain on the environment and on budgets.

For example, in London, Ontario, lobbying efforts by members of our local Council chapter led London city council to vote to stop selling bottled water in city offices, cafeterias and parks.

In Charlottetown, PEI, chapter activists have called on the provincial government to ban the sale of bottled water in all public schools. This decision came after the chapter successfully convinced the Charlottetown municipal government to provide tap water instead of bottled water at town meetings.

In New Westminster, B.C., chapter activists teamed up with environmental groups to pitch the idea of a ban. As reported by the media, chapter representative Andrew Murray told councillors, "We have some of the finest drinking water coming out of the tap. The city does not need to spend \$11,000 of taxpayers' money on water. ... This is one cost that needs to go." City councillors agreed to refer the issue to staff for further study.

And late last month Council of Canadians' Chairperson Maude Barlow and the Council's National Water Campaigner Meera Karunanathan visited one of Ottawa, Ontario's local school boards to convince board members to ban the sale of bottled water in the board's 150 schools. In her address to school board members, Maude called the bottled water industry "one of the most polluting industries on earth."

The Council of Canadians is calling on concerned citizens to speak out about the problems with bottled water. The bottled water industry has worked very hard to undermine faith in public water, selling what should be a shared public resource for huge profits. Bottled water companies use huge amounts of fossil fuels to produce and transport millions of plastic water bottles that end up in local landfills.

To find out more about fights in communities across the country to ban bottled water click [here](#).



Maude Barlow wins prestigious environmental award; protests award sponsor



Maude Barlow accepts the Canadian Environment Award's Citation of Lifetime Achievement

In June, Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians was honoured with the Canadian Environment Award's Citation of Lifetime Achievement for her work on national and international water issues. While accepting the award at a gala event sponsored by Shell, she used a portion of her keynote speech to highlight environmental and health impacts of the petrochemical industry, particularly on First Nations communities in Canada.

"The Aamjiwnaang Environment Committee in Sarnia has documented numerous health problems within their community as a result of the operations of petrochemical corporations like Shell," she said in her speech. "Sarnia alone produces more greenhouse gases than the entire province of British Columbia."

Maude also drew attention to Shell's plan to destroy the Shared Headwaters of BC's Skeena, Nass and Stikine rivers by drilling for coal-bed methane gas. In November 2007, Council of Canadians chapters participated in a day of action against Shell's operations in the Sacred Headwaters.

"The type of mining that Shell is proposing in B.C. is a highly invasive process that produces enormous volumes of toxic water," she said.

Before delivering her speech, Maude joined protesters gathered outside to denounce Shell's corporate sponsorship of the event. She also wore a button to highlight the protestors' message against the oil corporation, and is donating the award money to the Sacred Headwaters group to

support their struggle to protect their ancient fishing grounds.

To read the full text of Maude's speech, click [here](#).

Win! Yukon rejects TILMA

When B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell and former Alberta premier Ralph Klein signed the B.C.-Alberta Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement in 2006, they had a grand vision for Canada. TILMA was going to finally rid the country of so-called inter-provincial trade barriers and create a single economic space from coast to coast to coast. The agreement was said to be so appealing that other provinces would naturally want to sign it, and the two westernmost premiers would be recognized as pioneers of a new 21st century vision for Canada.

Instead, what they are finding is that when other provincial governments have a closer look at TILMA and its ramifications, some are saying "no thank you." The Yukon provincial government was the latest to reject the inter-provincial trade deal, following similar rejections by Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Under TILMA, provincial, municipal and government agency (including school boards and health authorities) policies designed to protect the environment or the health of communities are not exempt from potential corporate lawsuits claiming they are veiled barriers to trade or investment. Should an unelected TILMA dispute panel rule against the provincial government, the fines for not removing the environmental or health-related policy can reach as high as \$5 million.

In Quebec, Premier Jean Charest is currently pushing a TILMA-like agreement with Ontario, not because there are major barriers to the movement of goods and people between the provinces, but because he wants to pioneer a Canada-European Union free trade and investment agreement. The European Union's main concern? Canada's federal system, which gives provinces and their municipalities jurisdictional control over their communities that EU rules are quickly eradicating.

Could Alberta and B.C. have signed an agreement like TILMA by selling it as a means to dismantle local and provincial democracy for the sake of boosting the profits of foreign investors? Of course not. Inter-provincial trade is actually thriving and increasing faster than Canada-U.S. trade, according to some economists.

It is sad that Western Canada's premiers misled their citizens on the real reasons for signing TILMA. Sadder still that the B.C. government passed TILMA's implementation legislation without a full debate in the legislature. And probably saddest of all that these two premiers, who want to go down in history as pioneers, are being treated as pariahs by those provinces that were honest with their citizens and honestly couldn't find a single reason to join the TILMA club.

(This is a condensed excerpt from an editorial by Council of Canadians' Regional Organizer Carleen Pickard, which recently appeared in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*.)

For more information about TILMA and its implications, click [here](#).

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.