



**Senator Raynell Andreychuk**

Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

**Senator Janis G. Johnson**

Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights

**June 15, 2010**

Sent by e-mail

Dear Chairs of the Senate Standing Committees on International Trade and Human Rights,

**Re: Senate hearings on the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (Bill C-2)**

On June 14, the House of Commons voted 188-79 to pass Bill C-2, implementation legislation for the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (CCFTA). This agreement has been a source of considerable controversy for both Parliament and the public because of the serious and persistent human rights crisis in Colombia. Unfortunately, the process by which C-2 was moved through Parliament was also controversial and, in our view, wholly inadequate.

We have strong concerns about the lack of due process at the Commons Committee on International Trade (CIIT), which struck several witnesses off its list when it moved on June 1 to close debate on the CCFTA. The result of this sudden and troubling decision was that no Colombian labour or human rights organizations were allowed to comment on the efficacy of a human rights side agreement tabled the previous day in the House of Commons.

The Council of Canadians is calling on the Senate to hear from these witnesses, and perhaps to call on others to testify on Bill C-2 and the human rights agreement with Colombia. We feel strongly that the Senate has a responsibility to consider whether the human rights amendment and side-agreement contain adequate safeguards to protect human rights, and also whether the proscribed reporting mechanism is adequate.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this further.

Yours truly,

Maude Barlow  
National Chairperson  
The Council of Canadians

CC: Mobina Jaffer, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Human Rights  
Peter A. Stollery, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade