

"New Canadian Government" Sponsors Water Privatization Conference

Council of Canadians condemns Harper's sponsorship of water privatization conference

by Council of Canadians

The Council of Canadians is condemning the Harper government for its sponsorship of an international conference of water corporations that are seeking to privatize the resource.

The organization and representatives of Quebec-based allies unfurled an 8-metre long blue banner with the message "Public Water is a Human Right" at the front doors of the Palais des Congrès, where the World Water Congress is taking place. Delegates to the Congress were invited to sign the banner.

"It is shameful that Environment Canada is co-sponsoring the World Water Congress," says Council of Canadians Director of Campaigns and Communications Brent Patterson.

"The World Water Congress is a conference of large, unaccountable water corporations like Suez Environnement and Veolia Water, as well as the Oil Sands Developers Group. The focus of their meeting in Montreal this week is on how to profit from water scarcity and private water services."

"This sponsorship calls into question Prime Minister Harper's sincerity about protecting water," says Council of Canadians National Water Campaigner Meera Karunananthan. "The government should come clean about the amount of money it is giving the World Water Congress."

"The federal government also currently compels municipalities to explore P3s under the Building Canada Fund," notes Council of Canadians Ontario/Quebec Regional Organizer Mark Calzavara. "Harper should stop trying to force communities to 'partner' with corporations. Instead, the federal government should create a national water infrastructure fund and ensure clean water is delivered as a public service."

"The Prime Minister and the privateers at the World Water Congress would like to be able to sell water for profit to the highest bidder, but public water is a human right," adds Karunananthan. "The Harper government still seems oblivious to the realities of increasing water scarcity and climate change. It's clear most Canadians and Quebecers support the right to water, so the question is why doesn't Harper?"