

# Everyone in Canada is affected

The Conservative government is pushing through hundreds of pages of major legislative changes without consulting Canadians.

The latest budget Bill C-45 is being criticized by the opposition parties, environmental, scientific and Aboriginal groups.

Many of these legislative changes will have a drastic impact on Canadians and should not be rushed through Parliament without time for careful consideration, public scrutiny and debate.

## Fisheries Act

New changes to the Fisheries Act build on changes in the spring omnibus legislation which further undermines Canada's ecology and removes legal barriers to oil, pipeline and other developers. Four former fisheries ministers as well as countless scientists have publicly opposed these amendments. Currently resource developers have to receive authorization under the Act when their projects damage lakes, rivers or other fish habitat. They must also specify the corrective action. Under these new changes, the developer will no longer be responsible for fixing the environmental and habitat damage they cause.

## Indian Act

The amendments to the Indian Act are clearly designed to give the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs access over First Nations' lands and undue influence on vulnerable communities. The key amendment to the Act gives the government authority to determine the surrender of any portion of any First Nation territory at any given time.

This clause is in direct contravention of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which calls for the "free, prior and informed

consent" of all Indigenous peoples exercising their right of self-determination."

## The Navigable Waters Protection Act

The Navigable Waters Protection Act will be amended to reduce its scope to less than one per cent of Canadian waters. The new law will restrict federal oversight to the three oceans that border Canada and to a mere 97 lakes and 62 rivers.

The traditional territories of Aboriginal peoples will be at the greatest risk of environmental exploitation as the law was designed to provide quick development access to resource extraction industries, a great number of which operate on First Nations land.

## Canada Grain Act

Bill C-45 contains amendments to the Canada Grain Act that will remove regulations that protect independent grain producers, increase self-regulation, and decrease inspections.

The changes will also jeopardize the quality of Canada's internal and external grain supply by removing the requirement for inward inspection – a process put in place to ensure producers are paid for the quality and quantity of their grain and not cheated by international grain companies.

These amendments threaten the livelihood of independent producers while further protecting the rights of the global conglomerates.

## CRA Act

The Canada Revenue Agency was created in 1999 as a separate, independent employer from Treasury Board. Over time, the CRA and the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) have worked hard to develop a harmonious working relationship, allowing the negotiation of two consecutive

collective agreements before the expiry date of the previous agreement.

Changes to the Canada Revenue Agency Act will put the CRA back under the authority of Treasury Board who will oversee CRA's negotiating mandate as well as certain terms and conditions of employment. This change contradicts the specific reasons why the CRA was created and approved by Parliament – a better way of doing business for Canadians and creating a more beneficial labour relationship.

## Public Sector pensions

Unilateral amendments to public sector pension plans include increasing the normal retirement age from 60 to 65 for new hires beginning in 2013. The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) rejects this bill because it is an attack on younger generations who make up the majority of new hires in the public service.

The increase in the retirement age will generate a two-tier system, creating inequities between young and older workers in the public service, forcing younger workers to retire at an older age. The public service pension plan is sustainable and there is no reason to penalize young workers.

PSAC calls on the government to focus on strengthening pensions for all Canadians instead of weakening pension plans and retirement security for Canadians dedicated to public service.

*From the website of the  
Public Service Alliance of Canada:  
[http://www.psaac-afpc.com/news/2012/  
issues/20121030-e.shtml](http://www.psaac-afpc.com/news/2012/issues/20121030-e.shtml)*