

## LOCAL NEWS

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# Abitibi's \$500-million lawsuit an outrage, national council says **LATEST NEWS**

The Telegram

Days before the federal budget is to be tabled, AbitibiBowater has announced it is filing a NAFTA Chapter 11 challenge against Canada for \$500 million.

"Newfoundland is only taking back the land and water rights it lent Abitibi on condition they produce newsprint. If Abitibi is not going to do that any more, for whatever reason, the province is within its rights to reclaim the land and demand the company clean up what's left," states Council of Canadians trade campaigner Stuart Trew.

"Unfortunately, we are bound to NAFTA rules that mean the public could pay a corporation like Abitibi for the privilege of not employing people," says Trew. "The prime minister should take immediate steps to remove Chapter 11 from NAFTA."

"If the case were to succeed, water would be transformed from being public trust to a private property right of every company in the country with a water use permit - from the tar sands to the local bottled water plant," says Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow.

Before the Abitibi lawsuit, several other claims have drawn negative attention to NAFTA's investment chapter, including a \$2-million challenge in April 2009 from American chemical company Dow Agrosciences to Quebec's cosmetic pesticide law, and another lawsuit in Atlantic Canada against an environmental assessment that eventually cancelled a planned quarry. The Abitibi challenge brings the combined total of current Chapter 11 claims against Canada to over \$1.5 billion.

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, about 40 per cent of the challenges to government policy under NAFTA's Chapter 11 have been against environmental policies.

"Given these facts, it is a disgrace that Canada did not remove Chapter 11 from NAFTA years ago. Even worse, the Harper government is now vigorously pushing to include an identical investment chapter in trade talks with Europe," adds Barlow.

"During the upcoming federal budget debates, MPs should question the true costs of NAFTA. And they should demand that no Chapter 11 provision is in the sweeping Canada-European Union agreement currently being negotiated," concludes Barlow.

26/02/10

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**Andrew from NL writes:** First off, Harper only cares about Corporations and not Canadians, so don't expect much.

Secondly, another prime example of how the NAFTA is ruining this country.

Posted 26/02/2010 at 12:13 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**don from Newfoundland & Labrador writes:** Well said. Top-notch points. There's nothing more to be added. AB has nodd a chance. We must stop this type of commercial tyranny and revamp NAFTA or throw it out completely.

Posted 26/02/2010 at 12:18 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**willi walnut from clarenville, nF writes:** another few dollars to be pumped into the pockets of harpo and his cronies

Posted 26/02/2010 at 12:51 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Jerry from NL writes:** AB has nothing to lose by trying. The corporation is doomed already. If they lose, it doesn't make them any more doomed than they already are. As a doomed corporation, ANYTHING is worth a try, no matter how far out it is. They will lose and are still doomed, who cares what they want.

Posted 26/02/2010 at 1:16 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**member of the 20% from nl writes:** It will be interesting to see how it all plays out in court; judges have made very questionable and interesting rulings on serious matters before. Seems curious to me how many legal battles Little Man Dan is going to put our province through. Wonder what his track record is in private practice? As a lawyer that is; not as a businessman whose companies were propped up with government handouts and favourable untendered contracts.

Posted 26/02/2010 at 1:29 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Mark from NL writes:** Who knew Newfoundland and Labrador had so many NAFTA legal experts?!!

BTW, Maude Barlow and is a first class clown. Heed her comments at your peril.

Posted 26/02/2010 at 2:55 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

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