

## SS 10-1: Chapter 11

**To what extent should member countries be bound to the regulations of international organizations and agreements?**

### **Two Citizens' Groups Perspectives on NAFTA**

The Council of Canadians (COC) is Canada's largest citizens' organization and does not receive any funding from government. It works to "protect Canadian independence by promoting progressive policies on fair trade, clean water, safe food, public health care, and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians." Public Citizen is "a national, non profit consumer advocacy organization that represents consumer interests" in the US government and courts.

On its website, COC provides a link to the following information, which outlines Public Citizen's perspective on freer trade. As you read, consider your own views on how we should manage our country's natural resources.

*NAFTA includes an outrageous "proportional sharing" provision that grants other NAFTA signatory nations rights in perpetuity to a share of another signatory country's natural resources. Thus, if Canada were to suffer a natural gas shortage (if a pipeline blew, for example), it could not cease or substantially cut back exports to the United States in order to give priority to domestic needs—but would have to reduce domestic use and other exports so that the US would maintain its share of the smaller remaining volume. Giant water corporations are ravenously eyeing Canada's massive freshwater supply held in its lakes, rivers, and underground reserves, because if any Canadian province "opens the spigot" by agreeing to sell bulk water to a foreign country, then all Canadian water is automatically considered a traded good, not a natural resource over which Canada has sovereign control.*

—Council of Canadians website ([www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)),  
NAFTA at Ten Series: Undermining Sovereignty and Democracy,  
[http://www.publiccitizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_democracy.pdf](http://www.publiccitizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_democracy.pdf).

1. According to Public Citizen, how does freer trade with the United States erode Canada's sovereignty and independence?

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2. How would you feel if Canada actually lost control of its natural resources, such as oil or fresh water, in the future? Write a paragraph to explain your point of view.