The Wrecking Ball Bill: Why Canada must oppose Bill C-39

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Bill C-39, a massive 250-page omnibus bill introduced on Sept. 21st, is being rushed through parliament. The government aims to get it passed into law by December, circumventing meaningful review, and before Canadians know what is happening.

Bill C-39 takes a wrecking ball to Canada's environmental, transportation and labour laws, Indigenous rights, and other long-standing regulations. The stated aim of this legislation is to speed up and simplify the approval of projects deemed to be in the "National Interest."

How does this government define "the national interest"? The following summarizes what this Bill does. Indigenous, environmental, and labour groups, scientists, and peace groups want to stop it. Here is why.

>Bill C-39 over-rides the treaty and aboriginal rights of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples to enable resource extraction projects on their lands, and ignores their internationally protected right to Free Prior and Informed Consent.

As the Chiefs of First Nations Steering Committee stated on September 29:

"Bill C-39, the Building Canada Strong Act, uses the guise of national interest and foreign threats to infringe on Indigenous rights, our sacred Treaty rights and our inherent sovereignty."

Aerial view of Petrochemical oil refinery along the Athabasca River near the Oilsands mining area, Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada/Photo: Spotmatik Ltd.

>Bill C-39 dismantles democratic decision-making and makes industry-based regulators the sole reviewers for major energy and nuclear projects. It exempts even pre-approved projects from environmental law; authorizes federal ministers to weaken or remove present conditions of approval for energy extraction, and eliminates the right to strike in areas of "national interest".

In a nutshell, this bill enacts everything the oil and gas industry proposed in a public pressure campaign earlier this year, when the CEOs or executive officers of 14 companies called for cancellation of Canada's environmental policies. Carney's fall summit of the world's 200 wealthiest corporate CEOS in Toronto reinforced their message. Investment and profit come first. This principle applies to regions, projects, and the law.

As journalist Shiri Pasternak wrote in *The Guardian* (October 28, 2026):

"The new bill expands his previous legislation that created an expansive fast-tracking designation for "projects of national interest" to "regions of national interest", which could exempt vast areas of Canada from labour and Indigenous rights, and environmental protections. Geographic regions can be given this sweeping new designation by federal ministers, diminishing the sovereignty of parliament and bypassing local elected officials and affected citizens in these special economic zones…. Decision-making for new

pipelines, nuclear facilities, highways and other major infrastructure has been shifted to the very bodies charged with promoting these sectors."

So much for democracy and its first cousin, regulatory oversight!

>Bill C-39 is part of a legislative trend that grants extraordinary powers to the Prime Minister and government of Canada. It permits corporations and Ottawa to deny the right to strike wherever a project is deemed to be in the "national interest." It legislatively empowers corporate profit over human rights and the natural world.

Any corporation investing in pipelines or mining can be exempted from bargaining fairly with workers. Their projects are further exempted from having to apply for permits and authorizations. The newly appointed **Minister of One Canadian Economy** can simply approve them, without consent from the cabinet. The eligible project is then deemed to satisfy the requirements of environmental laws – an amazing feat of misinformation.

Bill C-39 fixes a maximum one-year approval for eligible new projects. And, it permits construction to begin while the assessment is still underway! This makes it almost impossible to stop a project or impose conditions that will mitigate its harmful impacts. Instead, the Bill compels decision-makers to consider the "technical, economic and practical feasibility" of imposing such conditions. Reducing costs, enhancing corporate profits, and supplying an expanding military have replaced climate change, Indigenous rights, workers' rights, and democratic process for this government.

>The largest user of oil and gas and critical minerals is the military industrial complex. As Gail Fairley's post on The SCAN! Blog explains,

"The US relies on imports of at least 12 key minerals critical to its military. **The government and mining industries see the increasing US and NATO need for critical minerals as an opportunity to profit even at the risk of losing our sovereignty, violating Indigenous rights, destroying the environment, and polluting our waterways.**

"The Canada-led G7 Critical Minerals Production Alliance (2025) secures critical mineral supply chains for advanced manufacturing and defence. Carney publicly says he is protecting our sovereignty and security, but his government has quietly allowed the US military to invest in the development

of critical mining projects in Canada. **This could limit Canada's access and control over our critical minerals and how they are used."**

So much for Canada's "national interest"!

>Summary:

Bill C-39 impedes public participation and consultation, weakens constitutional protections for Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, enables investment in "national interest" projects or regions to override the right to strike, threatens our right to a clean, healthy environment amidst a rising climate emergency, prioritizes Canada-US military buildup, and promises irreversible damage to future generations.

Bill C-39 is one of the worst pieces of legislation tabled by any federal government in decades. It is a travesty of justice.

It must be stopped.

Photo: Farouk Animashaun

*To read "The Fed's Wrecking Ball C-39," click here.