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## **Reacting to internet spying bill** -Sara Miles

Parliament may be adjourned until the fall, but several groups are already asking the government to consider its approach to proposed legislation concerning Canadian internet policies, that has been called 'bizarre', a 'dog's breakfast' and 'invasive'.

The Harper government is planning to introduce another omnibus crime bill, but this one will include the 'Lawful Access' bills that did not pass in previous parliaments.

This legislation would require internet service providers to install technology to track Canadians' internet use and allow authorities to use this data without a warrant. The legislation itself is causing concern, and the attempt to bury it in an omnibus bill is even more problematic.

In a March 9, 2011 letter to Public Safety Canada, Canada's Privacy Commissioners recognize the need for internet security, but say the proposed legislation will 'substantially diminish the privacy rights of Canadians... by enhancing the capacity of the state to conduct surveillance and access private information while reducing

the frequency and vigour of judicial scrutiny.' They go on to say that it would facilitate state surveillance of individuals. It is a significant piece of legislation that merits debate and consideration, rather than being pushed through in a mega-bill.

The BC Civil Liberties Association, in its June 23, 2011 letter to the government and opposition, also says that omnibus bills are 'problematic' and that the proposed legislation should be given 'appropriate hearings'.

NDP critics Charlie Angus and Jasbir Sandhu say the proposed surveillance bills are 'poorly thought out and would harm both our democracy and our digital economy.'

Though no government committee can consider it this summer as it has not yet been tabled, the half-a-million-strong pro-internet group OpenMedia.ca is running a campaign called Stop Online Spying to gather signatures opposing mandatory internet surveillance. ☞

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