

Between Speaking Points

Extracting the Motives of the Canadian Government

Canadian Youth Climate Coalition - COP17 Canadian Youth Delegation
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Canada – a historic leader in the creation of the Kyoto Protocol – has stated that it will not be supporting a second phase of the international agreement. Despite the capacity of Canada to deliver significant greenhouse gas emission reductions and its imperative to protect the many climate-vulnerable citizens under its jurisdiction it remains uncommitted to setting even the most basic targets necessary for preventing runaway climate change. Under the governance of the current government globally unprecedented growth of the Alberta Tar Sands has been seen. Suggested as the largest and highest polluting industrial project in history, the Tar Sands have been shown to have significant and disproportionate influence over Canada's domestic and international policy. This influence comes in three forms: the loading of government positions with oil executives and lobbyists; the deregulation and subsidy of Tar Sands development; and the international and domestic lobby to weaken import regulations and science surrounding the world's dirtiest and most inefficient source of fossil fuels.

Canadian Government is working for dirty oil, not Canadians.

- 1) While Canadian governments have always had connections with the oil industry, the Harper government is especially close. Much of the Harper government is made up of industry representatives who work in the interest of big oil. For example, the former chief of Encana, a subsidiary of Enbridge, has been an advisor to the Prime Minister and aggressively opposed Kyoto¹.
- 2) The ruling Conservative party is financed by industry with Encana constituting the largest contribution to the Conservatives than any other company¹.
- 3) Government and industry work together to defend the Tar Sands, going back and forth from working in government to working for lobbying firms. Geoff Norquay for example is a frequent public commentator and advocate for Harper's Conservative Party, and was the communications director for the party during the 2004 election. He has also worked with the public relations firm Earncliffe Strategy Group representing Suncor Energy and Shell Canada's Tar Sands interests¹.

¹ Clarke T. 2009. Energy Superpower, in Tar Sands Showdown: Canada and the New Politics of Oil in an Age of Climate Change. Toronto: James Lormier & Company Ltd. Publishers.

Canadian Government Subsidizes Tar Sands not Climate Solutions

- 1) The Canadian Government provides direct subsidies and full tax breaks to the Alberta Tar Sands. Between 1996 and 2002 these subsidies totalled \$8.3 billion, and contributes an approximate \$1 billion per year. In addition Tar Sands operators receive a 100% tax break on capital spending until 2015².
- 2) In 2006 and 2007 the Canadian Government spent \$8.6 billion dollars for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions reduction initiatives nationally for the next nine years. For the same time period this will contribute less resources to reducing Canada's emissions than total subsidies and forgone tax revenues contributed to the Alberta Tar Sands².
- 3) Canada ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002 – a legally binding agreement with the commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 6% below 1990 levels by 2012. Canada is predicted to be 30% above its KP targets by 2012¹, and the Alberta Tar Sands should account for 10% of this difference³.

Canadian Government's Tar Sands lobby in the U.S., Europe and at home in Canada

- 1) The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is actively promoting the Tar Sands in the United States and Europe through an "Oil Sands Advocacy Group" and "Oil Sands Advocacy Strategy"⁴. In Europe Canada is lobbying to undermine the EU Fuel Quality Directive. The Government of Alberta and Canada are lobbying to undermine Section 526-a U.S. federal clean fuels policy and against California's low-carbon fuel standard, both of which discourage burning dirty fuels⁵.
- 2) The scientific reports used by Canada to falsely promote the safety and environmental integrity of the Tar Sands are studies by Cambridge Energy Research Associates (IHS CERA), which is a research institute that works mainly for the oil industry. The Alberta Department of Energy, API-American Petroleum Institute, BP Canada, Canadian Association of Oil Producers, ConocoPhillips, Shell, Statoil Canada Ltd, Suncor and Total are contributors to the two reports produced by IHS CERA that the Canadian Government relies on for their lobby⁶.
- 3) Tar Sands companies continue to fund public relations campaigns in First Nations communities and schools, which has the effect of portraying Tar Sands expansion as beneficial for the well-being of Indigenous peoples.

² Dillon J & Thomson I. 2008. Pumped Up: How Canada Subsidizes fossil fuels at the expense of green alternatives. KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiative.

³ Environment Canada. 2011. National Inventory Report 1999-2009: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada. Government of Canada: En81-4/1-2009E-PDF.

⁴ Climate Action Network. 2011. The Tar Sands' Long Shadow: Canada's Campaign to Kill Climate Policies Outside Our Borders.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Friends of the Earth Europe. 2011. Canada's dirty lobby diary-Undermining the EU Fuel Quality Directive.