

## NEWS RELEASE

### **New report shines light on the state of fossil fuel industry in Eastern Canada – an overlooked region in energy transition debates**

**[HALIFAX/ Kijipuktuk, June 6, 2023]** - Despite Eastern Canada being highly invested in oil and gas production, the region is often left out of energy policy discussions typically focused on Western provinces. A new report maps the extensive existing and proposed fossil fuel exploration, extraction, transportation, refining distribution and consumption infrastructure in the four Atlantic provinces and Québec.

The authors highlight:

- Newfoundland and Labrador is the third-largest oil-producing province in the country with ambitions to double oil production by 2030, even as citizens advocate for an equitable transition.
- New Brunswick is home to Canada's largest oil refinery while two of the largest four are located in Montréal and Québec City.
- Electricity in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is largely dependent on coal.
- New projects that would further "lock in" increased carbon emissions continue to be planned – 19 new extractive projects have been proposed across the five provinces since 2010. These include the Bay du Nord offshore oil platform (in development), fracked gas projects in Quebec, New Brunswick and PEI (now banned through legislation or suspended through moratorium), the Energy East pipeline (cancelled), and a gas liquification plant and export terminal in Saguenay, Quebec, among others.

Despite the urgent need for energy transition, these provinces remain highly dependent on existing fossil fuel infrastructure for electricity generation, heating and transportation as well as for employment and governmental revenue, the authors say. However, most of the profits generated by the sector are funneled outside Eastern Canada – with the vast majority of the region's ultimate corporate shareholders based in fossil fuel finance centres like Calgary and Texas and global financial centres in North America, Europe and Asia.

"The New Brunswick government has consistently denied the reality of climate emergency by pushing forward new fracking projects despite the absence of social license and by dragging its feet on implementing its climate action plan, that itself only requires minimal emissions reductions of 3 Mt by 2030," says JP Sapinski, report co-author and Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Université de Moncton.

“Despite governmental obstructionism, thanks to a strong coordination between Indigenous, francophone and anglophone groups, most fossil extractivist projects have been kept at bay up to now.”

“Newfoundland and Labrador is a major oil producing province that is vulnerable to declining global oil demand,” says Angela Carter, report co-author and Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo. “While the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador strongly supports expanding offshore – contrary to its net zero commitments – there is growing awareness across the province of the economic and climate risks of oil and the need for government leadership to secure opportunities for workers and communities by transitioning away from oil dependence.”

The report also looks at recent and ongoing struggles by Indigenous communities, environmental and community groups opposing proposals for new extractive projects, and advocating for a just transition away from fossil fuels.

“In Nova Scotia social movements have successfully fought off major fossil fuel projects, but the pipeline of new projects continues to flow,” says Emily Eaton, co-author and professor of geography and environmental studies at the University of Regina. “New projects — like LNG terminals, hydrogen projects or replacing coal with gas — masquerade as 'green' but continue to threaten a climate safe future and new strategies are required to defeat them.”

“Movements in Québec have successfully fought off 3 waves of hydrocarbon infrastructure projects,” adds Eric Pineault, report co-author and professor of sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal. “As they advanced from one struggle to another, the emphasis switched from opposition to a struggle for a just energy transition based on the principle of sufficiency. The Common Front for an Energy Transition is the outcome of this process and brings together grass roots citizen groups, labour unions, environmental NGO’s and community groups. It is this broad coalition that defeated the proposed LNG Hub in Saguenay, contributed to the push that led to Québec adopting in law keep the oil in the soil legislation and is now calling for a wide public debate on Québec’s energy future. A lesson from Québec, offensive struggles for a different energy future are important.”

Christine Saulnier, Director of the CCPA-NS had this to say about the new report: “It is terrifying to see the destruction that these forest fires are wreaking. My heart goes out to all those who have lost their homes and have been displaced. These fires are, along with Hurricane Fiona, reminders of the urgency to act on the climate crisis and for governments to prepare better to mitigate and respond to its effects. This report highlights how important building solidarity is for contesting any further entrenchment of fossil fuel infrastructure and realizing a vision of a different energy future.”

*For more information or to arrange an interview with one of the co-authors, contact Lauren Matheson, at 902-579-9555 (cell) or [lmatheson@policyalternatives.ca](mailto:lmatheson@policyalternatives.ca)*

*The report is available on the CCPA-NS website in both English and French.*

*English Version: <https://policyalternatives.ca/Fossilfuellockin>*

*French Version: <https://policyalternatives.ca/Extractivismefossile>*

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