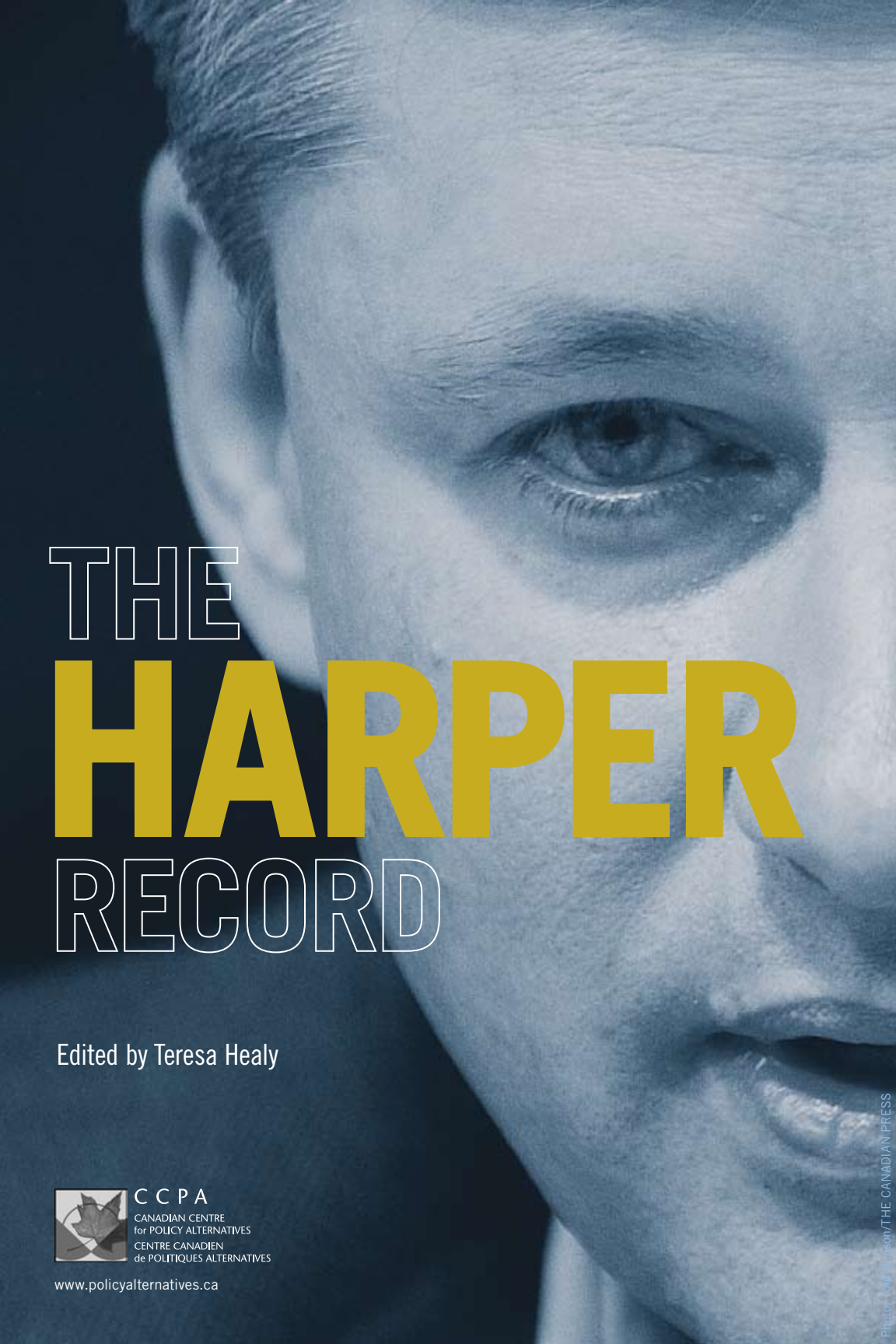

THE HARPER RECORD

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Stuck in the Muck

The Harper tar sands legacy

Caelie Frampton and Blair Redlin

NO MATTER THE cost, the Harper government has been relentless in its push for rapid, unchecked development of Alberta's tar sands. The devastating environmental, social, and economic effects of tar sands development for the climate, water, boreal forest, and First Nations communities have done nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the Conservative government. In line with the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) goal of "energy security" for the United States through a five-fold increase in tar sands production from one million barrels per day today to five million barrels a day by 2030,[1] the Harper government has been aggressive in removing all obstacles to tar sands expansion. Production in the tar sands is planned to double by 2012 and triple by 2018.

Although the Alberta provincial government is the owner and lead promoter of the tar sands, it would be impossible for the tar sands project to move ahead without the active assistance of the federal government. In numerous areas like regulation, pipeline approvals, environmental assessment and Aboriginal policy, both Liberal and Conservative federal governments have been key to increased tar sands production.

Forcing the Kearl Project

A prime example of the determination of the Harper government to drive tar sands projects ahead was a cabinet decision in June of 2008 to override a ruling by the Federal Court of Canada. The court decision concerned the adequacy of the federal/provincial environmental impact assessment for the new Kearl tar sands project sponsored by Imperial Oil and partner ExxonMobil.

The $8 billion Kearl project will denude 200 square km of boreal forest and is projected to generate 3.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year for the 50-year life of the project. The projected greenhouse gas emissions from the Kearl project alone are the equivalent of emissions from 800,000 cars.[2]

Because the environmental assessment panel had deemed that the Kearl project would have "no significant environmental effects," a coalition of four environmental groups — the Sierra Club, the Pembina Institute, Toxics Watch Society of Alberta, and the Prairie Acid Rain Coalition — challenged the validity of that judgment. The federal court held hearings on the application in January of 2008.

On March 3, 2008, federal court justice Daniele Tremblay-Lamer found that the Kearl environmental assessment panel had erred in law by failing to provide a rationale for its conclusions on greenhouse gas emissions. The Harper Conservatives then moved at breakneck speed to overrule the court decisions that were holding up the Kearl project. The federal/provincial environmental assessment panel was immediately reconvened to rapidly submit a new report to the federal government that reiterated its earlier conclusion that new greenhouse gas emissions of 3.7 million tonnes per year for 50 years were not a significant environmental problem. The federal cabinet formally accepted this rationale on June 5, 2008, and the Kearl project was back on track and will be up and running by 2012.

On June 17, 2008, the appellant groups announced they would no longer pursue their environmental assessment challenge in the face of the Harper government's determination to overrule the courts. They said the federal environmental assessment process for the tar sands is

an "international embarrassment."[3] Not a single tar sands project application has ever been denied.

Failing the Kyoto Protocol

The tar sands are the largest contributor and fastest growing source of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.[4] This puts the country in a bind when it comes to meeting the mandatory goals of the Kyoto Protocol to prevent climate change. Since ratification of Kyoto by the Canadian Parliament in 2002, the government has been legally committed to reducing greenhouse gas pollution by 6% below 1990 levels by 2012. Yet, largely due to tar sands expansion, Canada is expected to be 44% above its permitted Kyoto levels by 2010.[5] This isn't surprising when the top five Canadian polluters are tar sands operators.[6]

While the former Martin Liberal government failed to implement meaningful greenhouse gas reductions, the Harper government has reneged on Kyoto altogether. On April 25, 2006, former Conservative Environment Minister Rona Ambrose announced that Canada will not be meeting its Kyoto targets. Instead, Canada will participate in the U.S.-backed Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. In May 2006, environmental funding designed to meet the Kyoto standards was cut. The Harper government said it was developing a new plan instead.

In February 2007, Bill C-288 was passed by Parliament. This Opposition-sponsored legislation was intended to force the government to "ensure that Canada meets its global climate change obligations under the Kyoto Protocol." Even though the legislation required the government to prepare a detailed action plan within 60 days, the Harper government has ignored it, citing economic concerns.[7]

In May 2007, Friends of the Earth sued the Canadian federal government for failing to meet its Kyoto Protocol obligations to cut greenhouse gas emissions. This was based on a clause in the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* that requires Ottawa to "prevent air pollution that violates an international agreement binding on Canada."

The Harper government's refusal to implement the Kyoto Protocol sends a signal to the world that Canada doesn't care about international

treaty obligations, let alone climate change. Further, the federal government is ignoring non-industrialized countries, and indeed the effects on Canada's own Arctic, where only a small portion of greenhouse gases are produced, but where climate change damage is already most severe.

Carbon capture spin

While skipping out on Kyoto, the Harper government has placed its bet on storage of carbon underground as a way to reduce atmospheric emissions so that tar sands production can expand unabated. Tar sands production generates three times as much greenhouse gas as conventional petroleum production,[8] so if the federal government says carbon capture is going to do the trick, we should expect lots of it and soon. But carbon capture and storage is mostly unproven and untested.

On March 10, 2008, federal Environment Minister John Baird announced regulations for tar sands plants and other industrial emitters. These regulations were trumpeted as a signal that new tar sands plants must implement carbon capture and underground storage. But the details of the announcement show that many more new plants — like the Kearl project — will be up and running before any carbon capture rules take effect. There is no requirement for the Kearl project to capture or store carbon, even though it is a new project slated to be running in 2012.

Details of the actual regulations will be finalized in 2009 and will start to take effect in 2010, but only apply to tar sands facilities built after 2012. Those regulations will require "...oil sands upgraders, in-situ plans and coal-fired electricity plants that come into operation in 2012 or later to meet carbon capture and storage standards by 2018."[9]

In other words, all new facilities that start operating after 2012 will only have to meet an unspecified carbon capture standard by 2018 — ten years from today. This is a very long lead time, far in the future. It's as if we have all the time in the world to deal with global warming and are not facing a climate emergency today.

The new standards continue to rely on the discredited concept of "intensity" targets which reduce the amount of emissions per unit of

production while still permitting overall increases in greenhouse gas emissions as production levels increase.

The overall result of the Harper government plan is that annual emissions from the tar sands will triple over the next decade, from 25 million tonnes today to 75 million tonnes in 2018.[10]

Fort Chipewyan health crisis

Another example of the federal determination to let nothing stand in the way of tar sands development is the callous way the Harper government has responded to the health crisis facing the Cree people of the Fort Chipewyan, Fort MacKay and Fort Fitzgerald areas north of Fort McMurray. Fort Chipewyan is located beside Lake Athabasca, downstream from the many tar sands facilities located close to the Athabasca River.

Since tar sands production started to ramp up in the 1970s, the people of Fort Chipewyan and nearby communities have been faced with a plague of unusual cancers (such as liver, blood and bile duct cancer), as well as other diseases, an ever-increasing death rate, and a steadily worsening health crisis.

The federal government has a fiduciary obligation for First Nations health care, so Aboriginal health services are a federal responsibility. This obligation is confirmed in some numbered treaties and reflected in section 73(1) of the *Indian Act* (1874).[11]

Despite this responsibility, the federal government has firmly resisted instituting the baseline epidemiological health study long demanded by the people of Fort Chipewyan. Indeed, doctors from the Harper government's Health Canada went so far as to file complaints with the College of Physicians and Surgeons against a local doctor, John O'Connor, when he spoke out publicly about the serious cancer and health emergency facing the Fort Chipewyan community.[12] Fortunately, the College cleared Dr. O'Connor in early 2008, but O'Connor had already moved to Nova Scotia in 2007.[13]

An independent scientific study by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation confirmed the presence of elevated levels of arsenic and mercury in local water and wildlife. The Cree people of the area rely for food on

fish and animals which are likely contaminated, and their local water supply comes directly from the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca, downstream from where Suncor (for example) continues to send into the river what is called "process water."[14]

If the federal government was taking its fiduciary responsibilities for Aboriginal health seriously, it would at a minimum fund a new water supply for Fort Chipewyan from nearby inland lakes, and would launch a comprehensive baseline health study immediately.

The government's resistance to the baseline health study reflects a reluctance to develop any information which might create difficulties for tar sands corporations. The health of the First Nations people of the area ranks far behind promotion of new tar sands developments in the priorities of the Harper government.

Temporary foreign workers

Since 2006, the federal government has rapidly expanded the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program. Increased use of temporary foreign worker programs is one of the goals of the Security and Prosperity Partnership. According to the Alberta Federation of Labour, a construction workforce of more than 200,000 will be needed to meet upcoming development demands in Alberta. A disposable workforce is not new to Canada, with the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program and the Live-in Caregiver Program, but the growth and size of the TFW Program helps ensure that tar sands labour is provided in the cheapest way possible.

The federal government now makes it very easy for employers to bring in temporary foreign workers. In 2007, the Minister of Human Resources announced that, in B.C. and Alberta, approval for TFW's will be granted within 3–5 days, if the employer falls within 12 designated occupations. The list of eligible occupations was traditionally geared towards highly educated international workers. That group has recently been expanded to include "semi-skilled" and "low-skilled" occupations, including fast food and retail. Most importantly, these workers are not eligible for permanent or regular immigrant status.

Temporary foreign workers have great difficulty insisting on basic employment standard protections since they can be sent home quickly at the whim of an employer. Foreign-worker programs are being used to increase the labour pool by creating a population of exploited and vulnerable workers, all while keeping wages down.

In 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada issued a total of 15,172 new temporary work permits for Alberta, bringing the total number of temporary foreign workers in the province to 22,392. By comparison, in 2005, 15,815 were working in Canada.[15] There are now more Temporary Foreign Workers than permanent immigrants entering Alberta each year.

In April 2007, two temporary workers from China were killed when a tank collapsed at a Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. tar sands site. The two had been part of a crew of 300 workers brought to Alberta by a Chinese contractor. When a second tank collapsed soon after the first, the contract was quickly cancelled and all the Chinese workers were sent home,[16] highlighting the disposable and unstable nature of temporary foreign worker employment. At a minimum, the federal government should ensure the health and safety of temporary foreign workers and should permit them to become permanent immigrants.

Security and Prosperity Partnership

The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) is the crucial context for the Harper Conservative plan to expand tar sands development.

The core of the SPP structure is the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), made up of 30 top Chief Executive Officers, ten from each of the three North American countries. The CEO of major tar sands producer Suncor is one of the members of the NACC. Each year, the NACC issues a report for the political leaders of the three countries, with a recommended policy menu that is almost invariably supported and implemented quickly.

The SPP is also structured to receive corporate advice on a number of specific issues through topic-specific working groups. One of the most influential is the North American Energy Working Group and its

sub-committee, the Oil Sands Experts Group.[17] The Oil Sands Experts Group held a workshop in Houston in January of 2006 which developed a policy agenda that is now being implemented.[18] In explaining the project, the workshop report said: "Through the SPP, Canada, the United States and Mexico agreed to collaborate on the development of oil sands resources..."

The report sets out a "plan for a smooth transition towards bitumen production that could be as high as 5 million barrels per day (by 2030)..." (up from approximately one million barrels per day today). The report goes on to say, "If oil sands production is to realize its full potential, new markets must be developed in the U.S. and possibly offshore via the west coast."

> New pipelines and pipeline expansion plans are already in place to meet the certain doubling of oil sands production to two million barrels per day by the 2010 to 2012 timeframe. This includes extensions of the market via a west coast port and more deeply into the U.S.
>
> The five fold expansion anticipated for oil sands products in a relatively short time span will represent many challenges for the pipeline industry. New and expanded pipelines will move more volume into existing and expanding interior U.S. markets and offer shipments to California via the Canadian west coast.

Now, only two years later, we see a plethora of applications for tar sands pipelines to the U.S., as well as to an expanded port at Kitimat on the B.C. coast. The SPP vision for a five-fold expansion of tar sands production is well under way.

But the SPP is about more than economics. At its core, it is also about "security" and military integration. The tar sands help to feed the U.S. military machine. The U.S. Department of Defense burns up approximately 395,000 barrels of oil per day and is the largest single consumer of oil in the world. The Pentagon consumes an estimated 85% of the U.S. government's total use of oil.[19]

Given that Canada exports some 750,000 barrels of oil per day to the U.S. and is now the major foreign source of oil for the U.S., much of the U.S. military's demand for oil is being supplied from the Alberta

tar sands. Canadians opposed to the war in Iraq can reflect on our own role in supporting the U.S. military with tar sands oil.

Stephen Harper is a strong believer in deep North American integration, corporate influence over government and the SPP. His government's agenda of aggressive tar sands expansion is reflective of all that.

Pipelines, pipelines everywhere — except to Eastern Canada

As per the recommendations of the SPP working group, new export pipeline projects are moving ahead rapidly. Because tar sands bitumen is meant to be exported, rather than used or refined in Canada, the rapid expansion of export pipelines is key to the overall plan.

It is incredible that there is no pipeline to transport Alberta petroleum to Eastern Canada. Canada currently imports 40% of the oil that it uses. While a small amount of tar sands product is used in Western Canada, the vast bulk of it goes south to the U.S.

The National Energy Board and the Harper cabinet have recently been considering three major new export pipeline proposals. They are Trans-Canada Corporation's Keystone pipeline, Enbridge Inc.'s Southern Lights Pipeline, and the Alberta Clipper Expansion.

Taken together, the three pipelines to the U.S. will have an initial capacity to ship 1.07 million barrels per day of tar sands bitumen to the United States, with potential for that to increase to 1.57 million barrels per day.[20] None of that bitumen will be refined in Canada.

In order to move highly viscous bitumen through pipelines efficiently, it is necessary to mix it with diluent. Diluent is sometimes called condensate and is similar to kerosene or paint thinner.

The Southern Lights pipeline will transport diluent from Chicago to Edmonton, where it will be mixed with bitumen and shipped south. The diluent will then be stripped out from the bitumen in the U.S., recycled and transported back to Alberta again. The entire concept is based on the idea that the bitumen will be refined into oil in the United States. If the tar sands were being refined in Canada, there would be no need to transport the diluent in this way.

As for the Keystone pipeline, the Communications, Energy and Paperworker's union has dubbed it a "…lost opportunity to create 18,000 refining jobs in Canada," based on a report it commissioned from the economic consulting firm Infometrica Ltd. for National Energy Board hearings on the Keystone proposal.[21] The Keystone pipeline is projected to start operations in 2009 and will eventually export 590,000 barrels of bitumen per day, which will be 100% of all incremental tar sands production at that time. Tar sands bitumen is now, or will shortly, be refined in Indiana, South Dakota, Ohio, Colorado, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pensylvania, and along the U.S. Gulf Coast.[22]

The Harper government has made it a priority to expedite approval of these pipeline projects. Despite an appeal to the federal cabinet of the National Energy Board's approval of the Keystone pipeline in October 2007, the Harper cabinet gave final approval in December 2007.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources requested that approval of the Southern Lights and Alberta Clipper projects be delayed until the Committee had an opportunity to review their implications for energy security and the public interest; but the Harper cabinet ignored the Committee's request and gave final approval to both projects on May 13, 2008, just three months after the National Energy Board's preliminary approval. As with other aspects of the tar sands expansion plan, the Harper government has tolerated no delay in development of new export pipelines.

In addition to the pipelines pointing south from Alberta and again in keeping with the plan scoped out by the SPP working group, there are also major proposals for pipelines to the British Columbia west coast.

The most significant of these is the $4.2 billion Gateway pipeline project sponsored by Enbridge. The Gateway proposal consists of an export pipeline to take at least 400,000 barrels per day of tar sands bitumen from Alberta to an expanded port at Kitimat, B.C., and a second pipeline to take 150 thousand barrels per day of diluent condensate back to Alberta from Kitimat. The export pipeline will feed oil tankers that will take tar sands bitumen to China, India, and California for processing there. The condensate will come to B.C. in tankers from Russia. Enbridge intends to seek regulatory approval of the Gateway project in early 2009.

If the Gateway proposal goes ahead, oil supertankers will ply the fragile coastal ecosystems of the B.C. Inside Passage, which is where the Harper government comes in. Since 1972, the federal government has had a moratorium in place to prevent oil tanker traffic off the B.C. north coast. The disastrous Exxon Valdez oil spill in nearby Alaska in the late 1980s reminded Canadians of the need for the moratorium. In 2003 and 2004, Natural Resources Canada reviewed the moratorium and concluded it should stay in place.

Under the Harper administration, however, the moratorium on north coast tanker traffic is under significant threat. Since January of 2006, tankers have been allowed to offload condensate at Kitimat, where it is transferred to rail-cars and transported by train to Alberta.

The B.C. Liberal government of Gordon Campbell has been quietly advancing to the federal government an absurd interpretation of the moratorium, claiming it is only meant to cover foreign oil tankers transiting the B.C. coast and is not directed at tankers sailing to and from B.C. ports.[23] The Harper government has done nothing to defend the tanker moratorium against the condensate tankers and is doubtless looking for ways to similarly "re-interpret" its prohibition of oil supertankers.

The Gateway pipelines faces significant concern and potential opposition from many of the 40 First Nations whose unceded traditional territory the pipelines will pass through. The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and the Haida Nation are among 18 Aboriginal nations participating in a formal review process of the pipelines that the First Nations themselves have set up.[24]

Energy giant Kinder Morgan has recently announced that it too wishes to build a tar sands export pipeline to Kitimat, B.C. It is advancing plans to build a northern leg from its existing Trans-Mountain line, connecting to Kitimat from Valemont.[25] This extensive network of tar sands export pipelines is bringing to reality the vision of the SPP working group. The Harper government is doing everything it can to rapidly facilitate the export of huge volumes of unrefined tar sands bitumen.

Economic considerations

Though the tar sands are creating thousands of jobs, mostly in construction and many staffed by temporary foreign workers, there are negative implications for the economy and finances of Canada as a whole.

High value of the Canadian dollar and decline in manufacturing

Canada has lost 400,000 manufacturing jobs since 2002 — 15% of all manufacturing jobs in the country — with the pace of losses recently accelerating even more. The loss of manufacturing jobs can be attributed to the currently high value of the Canadian dollar, which lately has been close to par with the U.S. currency for the first time in decades. The competitive export advantage of a lower dollar has been lost for industries like auto and forestry.

With world oil prices averaging $120 (U.S.) per barrel, huge demand for Canadian oil and gas in the U.S. and record profits, the value of Canadian oil companies and their assets has skyrocketed. As Canadian Auto Workers economist Jim Stanford put it: "High global prices for oil minerals lead to incredible profits for those companies, boosting their stock value and attracting foreign investors."[26] (See Stanford elsewhere in this volume.) This, in turn, has made the Canadian dollar extremely attractive to currency speculators.

Big public subsidies

Incredibly, given the high world price of oil and oil company profits that are hitting the stratosphere, the government of Canada continues to provide subsidies to tar sands development.

The main form of subsidy is the tax expenditure known as the Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (ACCA). The ACCA allows oil companies to defer all federal and provincial taxes until 100% of project capital costs have been paid off. According to recent reports by Kairos Canada and the Pembina Institute, the value of this subsidy for the tar sands developers is $1.5 billion over five years (i.e., $300 million per year from 2007 to 2011).[27] The 2007 federal budget announced that the ACCA

will be phased out, but only very slowly. For new projects, the phase-out will start in 2011 and be complete in 2015.

Other examples of subsidies include full deductibility for exploration expenses and $596 million in federal funds set aside for mitigation and socioeconomic review related to the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline, which is meant to supply gas to tar sands facilities.

Draining of Canada's natural gas reserves

The tar sands are a voracious consumer of natural gas. Each tar sands barrel requires 250 cubic feet of natural gas if mined, 1,000 cubic feet if produced in-situ, and another 500 cubic feet if the bitumen is upgraded to synthetic oil. Given planned expansions, it is projected that tar sands plants will be using four times as much natural gas in 2018 as they used in 2004. Tar sands, of course, are not the only reason for depletion, but by 2018 Canada's proven reserves of natural gas will have been exhausted and an estimated 24% of additional discovered reserves will be in use.[28]

Burning so much comparatively clean and valuable natural gas to create dirty tar sands oil has been compared to using gold to make lead. Canadians require natural gas for heating and a variety of other needs, but tar sands demand will contribute to a rapid depletion of reserves.

Given general construction inflation (in part caused by unchecked expansion of tar sands plants), the cost of the 1200-km Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline has shot through the roof and is now estimated at $16.2 billion. The consortium of oil companies sponsoring the project have been in discussion with the federal government seeking special royalty and tax breaks.

Environmental implications

As concerns from First Nations communities like Fort Chipewyan demonstrate, the tar sands are already taking a huge toll on the ecology of northern Alberta. Unfortunately, industry has been left to monitor the environmental impacts itself. Because most research is conducted by corporations, the federal Standing Committee on Natural Resources

has called on government agencies to step up public research to determine the true impacts on the Athabasca water system.

The federal government largely defers to Alberta on tar sands management. As a result, Canadian federal laws like the *Fisheries Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* are not being properly enforced and jurisdiction is a blur. Environmental protection, however, is a shared responsibility, which is why federal laws should apply. A federal government so heavily involved in the approvals process for development is also accountable for environmental impacts.

Water Depletion

Tar sands production requires massive and unsustainable quantities of water. Tar sands plants use between 2 and 4.5 barrels of water for every barrel of tar sands bitumen. Although some of that water is recycled, considerable quantities end up in massive toxic tailing ponds, some of which are so large they can be seen from outer space.

In 2006, an Alberta government Ministerial Strategy Committee warned that there may not be enough water in the Athabasca system to support planned tar sands expansions. The committee report said: "Over the long term, the Athabasca River may not have sufficient flows to meet the needs of all the planned operations and maintain adequate in-stream flows."[29]

The federal government has direct responsibility for a number of the issues related to this unsustainable water depletion, including protection of fisheries, groundwater issues, general environmental responsibilities of Environment Canada, and protection of wildlife, let alone inter-provincial and territorial implications for the Peace-Athabasca delta, Lake Athabasca, and connected river systems such as the Mackenzie and the Slave. As with so much else, the Harper government has been missing in action when it comes to ecosystem implications of Athabasca river system depletion.

Nuclear Reactors

Because of concerns about the amount of natural gas needed to power the energy-sucking tar sands, the option of using CANDU nuclear reactors has surfaced. Royal Dutch Shell and Husky Energy are working with the private Energy Alberta Corporation, as well as the federal Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., to explore nuclear potential. There are currently no nuclear reactors west of Ontario.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources reviewed the nuclear ideas in a 2007 report.[30] The committee estimated that, based on current plants and proposed tar sands expansion, 20 nuclear reactors would be necessary to replace natural gas. They recommended that nuclear plans be put on hold.

Nuclear power in Northern Alberta would have all the damaging results experienced elsewhere, including great difficulty in disposing of nuclear waste, other safety issues, and big costs. Yet it is a tempting option for some because nuclear plants do not produce greenhouse gases. If nuclear goes ahead, the federal government will have a key role, particularly because AECL is interested in selling reactors.

Boreal forest

Canada's boreal forest stretches between several provinces and represents one-quarter of the world's remaining intact forest. The national government owes an obligation to the world to steward it with care. But, according to Environment Canada, development of the tar sands is "staggering for forest conservation and reclamation".[31]

When bitumen is extracted from the soil, large tracts of forest are cut down. But it isn't just trees that are lost, since the forest ecosystem supports wetlands and lakes. After 40 years of mining, only one operation, Syncrude (March 2008), has received a reclamation certificate from the government of Alberta.

Alberta tar sands deposits cover an area the size of Florida. Approximately 3,000 square kilometres of boreal forest could be cleared if development goes ahead as planned. A further 137,000 square kilometres could be fragmented to accommodate infrastructure like roads

and pipelines.[32] The Northern Alberta boreal ecosystem is at risk of being forced beyond its tipping point, resulting in unalterable damage.

Conclusion

Unplanned and unfettered development of new tar sands facilities needs to be resisted, as it will only worsen already critical environmental, economic, and social problems.

Rather than merely being a tar sands booster, the federal government should be taking pro-active steps to protect the public interest. Just a few examples include:

- respecting proper environmental assessments;
- using laws designed to protect ecosystems;
- honouring federal obligations to First Nations; and
- restoring justice to temporary foreign workers by allowing immigration to Canada and monitoring to ensure that working conditions are safe.

But if the government is going to be moved to take even those simple steps, there is an urgent need for community organizing on tar sands issues. Whether the demand is for a moratorium, "no new approvals," or a complete halt to tar sands production, there is much work for activists to do:

- Canadians should insist the federal government take urgent steps to resolve the cancer and water crisis facing Fort Chipewyan. The federal government should get started on a baseline health study and move quickly to fund a new, healthy water supply for the Fort Chipewyan community.
- Canadians need to demand a comprehensive energy strategy that includes government regulation. This means re-negotiation or abrogation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, and an end to Canada's participation in the SPP. Discussion of an energy

strategy should be driven by the urgent need to curb climate change.

- The tar sands have connections throughout Canada. Campaigns are needed to stop pipelines and supertankers on the B.C. coast, to protect Aboriginal rights and ecosystems in Alberta, and to prevent expansion of export pipelines to the U.S.[33]

Rapid, unrestrained, and unsustainable tar sands development is a major legacy of both the Martin and Harper administrations. Canadians who care about the environment, Aboriginal rights, democracy, or worker rights have much to do to resist and reverse the damage already done.