

Tar Sands & Global Warming¹

Global warming is a worldwide concern considered one of the greatest threats facing our planet today. It will have detrimental impacts on human health, wildlife, aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and our economy. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), human activity is the primary driver of global warming. Despite this, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, and Canada is contributing to further climate change.

The Facts:

- Tar sands development is the **single largest contributor, and fastest growing source** of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions
- Due to the tar sands, Alberta is ranked as the **industrial pollution capital** of Canada
- The tar sands can single handedly prevent Canada from meeting it's international obligations to reduce greenhouse gases. Canada's Kyoto commitment is for a 6% reduction from 1990 levels, equivalent to approximately 36 Mega Tons of carbon dioxide. Tar sands emissions alone are expected to increase from 17 Mega Tons in 1990 to over 100 Mega Tons by 2012 – an increase of over 80 Mega Tons.
- By 2011, tar sands plants are expected to produce emissions equivalent to more than 80 million tonnes of CO2 per year- that's more than the emissions of ALL of Canada's passenger cars put together over an entire year!
- Tar sands development produces 4 times more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil reserves
- A major factor in the push for development of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline which will affect 3500 km of Arctic land is the increasing demand for natural gas in the tar sands
- To produce one barrel of oil, 4 tonnes of material are mined, 2-5 barrels of water are used to extract the bitumen, and enough natural gas to heat 1.5 homes for a day is used

¹All information on this fact sheet was retrieved from:
David Suzuki Foundation (2007). www.davidsuzuki.org
The Pembina Institute (2007). www.oilsandswatch.org
The Sierra Club, Prairie Chapter (2007). www.sierraclub.ca/prairie
The Wilderness Committee (2007). Dollars and sense: The true cost of Alberta's oil sands.
<http://www.wildernesscommittee.org/campaigns/rainforest/reportConstruction/boreal/1996/Vol15No10/sense>