

What are Canada's Tar Sands?

Centered in the Canadian Boreal forest just downstream of the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains are Canada's tar sands, a massive oil development that has been dubbed "the most destructive project on Earth." Despite being one of the dirtiest, most energy-intensive sources of crude oil in the world, the tar sands have been touted as an alternative to U.S. dependence on oil from conflict regions such as the Middle East and Nigeria.

Big Oil's push into the tar sands presents a choice: to extract ever-dirtier, unconventional sources of transportation fuel—at an even greater cost to our health and environment—or to set a course for a more sustainable future powered by cleaner renewable fuels.

Invest in Clean Energy

The alternative is simple: **redirect investment capital** slated for the tar sands into sustainable alternatives. Investing in clean energy also creates new green jobs. We need to stop investing in dirty fossil fuels and start **funding the future**.

Take Action

Don't let banks invest your money in tar sands. Visit RAN.org to learn more about choosing a bank that shares your values.

- » Sign up for email updates at ran.org to learn the latest developments and more ways to make a difference.
- » Learn about the Canadian Indigenous Tar Sands Campaign at the Indigenous Environmental Network: ienearth.org/tarsandsinfo.html

About RAN

RAN runs hard-hitting campaigns to stop climate change and protect forests through education, organizing and non-violent direct action. Visit us online at RAN.org.



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CANADA'S TAR SANDS: the most destructive project on Earth



Canada's Dirty Oil

In order to produce tar sands oil, the oil industry is transforming Canada's boreal forests and wetlands (one of the world's last remaining intact ecosystems), contaminating drinking water and jeopardizing the health of Alberta's First Nations. And, if that wasn't bad enough, the tar sands are now poised to become Canada's largest single emitter of greenhouse gas.

Fueling U.S. Oil Addiction

The tar sands are already the single largest source of oil imports to the United States. More and more Americans are concerned about the spread of tar sands oil – mined in northeastern Alberta and piped to, refined in, and consumed in the United States. Since refining the dirtier crude oil from the tar sands requires more energy, greenhouse gas emissions from refineries in the US is expected to soar by as much as 40 percent in the next decade.

A Closer Look at Tar Sands

Cooking the Climate

Oil production from tar sands is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas pollution in Canada. Producing a barrel of oil from tar sands emits between 3 and 5 times the greenhouse gas pollution of conventional oil production. By 2015, the oil sands could emit more greenhouse gases than the nation of Denmark (pop. 5.4 million).

Destroying globally rare forests:

A pristine forest covering over 65,000km² (equivalent in size to California's Mojave Desert) is slated for destruction as a result of tar sands expansion. Canada's Boreal Forest, the world's largest terrestrial carbon storehouse and home to the largest forest wetland ecosystems left on the planet, will be lost if we don't stop this dirty oil expansion.

Harming human health:

Mining oil from tar sands requires poisoning so much clean water that the resulting waste ponds can be seen from space. The health impacts to Canada's First Nation communities are severe, with cancer rates up in some communities as much as 400 times its usual frequency.



Image: AGIFPOP Communications

The Worlds' Climate Problem

Worldwide progress toward curbing the growing climate crisis is being threatened by a single, massive project taking place in the Canadian wilderness. Major oil companies, banks and investors are pouring billions of dollars into the development of the Canadian Tar Sands, the dirtiest and most desperate attempt yet to profit from and prolong humanity's crippling addiction to oil.

Extracting oil from these sludgy deposits in the heart of Canada's Boreal forest results in three times more global warming-causing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than conventional oil. Tar sands development is turning once pristine stretches of forest into desolate, post-apocalyptic landscapes and producing toxic pollution that is harmful to the health and quality of life of the region's First Nations and other frontline communities.



Photo: Pembina Institute