

Tar Sands Truths



Write a Letter to Premier Stelmach

The pace and scale of tar sands development is outstripping the ability of the federal and provincial governments to protect the regional, national and global environment and climate. Alberta is our home and it deserves to be protected for future generations. Join fellow Albertans in the crucial effort to urge Premier Stelmach to ensure a sane pace of development for the province, now and into the future.



How do the tar sands affect Alberta?

- The area covered by tar sands developments will impact 23 per cent of Alberta - a piece of pristine boreal forest the size of Florida.
- The industry is linked to both upstream (increased demand for new natural gas production) and downstream (refineries and air pollution from end-use) environmental impacts.
- Tar sands development already accounts for 65 per cent of withdrawals from the Athabasca River. Tar sands operations have already been licensed to withdraw about 349 million cubic metres of water per year, more than twice the volume required from the Bow River for the city of Calgary's domestic needs.
- The pace of development and rapid population increase in northern Alberta is placing stress on essential services like housing, education and healthcare.
- The projects are driven by the demand for inefficient transportation fuels when alternatives and greater efficiency standards are available.
- The tar sands are already the single largest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada and will make up approximately 50% of the growth in national emissions between 1990 and 2012.
- While companies are required to reclaim the land that they disturb, after 40 years of mining no operation has received a reclamation certificate – this is cause for concern especially when oil sands have the potential to impact 1/4 of Alberta.

According to Premier Ed Stelmach, Alberta's economic boom is preventing the government from taking action to protect our land, air, water and climate. He thinks we should just accept these "costs" to development. His refusal to take substantive action on global warming or to 'take a time-out' on tar sands developments is grounded in false claims that such action would destroy our economy.

Recent analysis shows that for only \$1/barrel oil sands companies could become Carbon Neutral. This is hardly the economic catastrophe Stelmach projects. We have the ability to move toward a clean and safe energy future, and to leave a legacy that our children can live with!

Letter writing template:

Please use the following letter in any way you wish to express your thoughts. It may be used as an example or you can simply add your name. A personal angle always adds strength to the argument.

**The Honourable Ed Stelmach
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Dear Premier Stelmach,

Alberta's tar sands are one of the biggest social and ecological challenges in North America, fueling climate change, destroying our boreal forest, and drying up our mighty rivers. As development continues at an alarming rate, concerns are growing over the impacts on communities and the environment.

Sudden and unchecked development covering a quarter of our province is creating negative impacts faster than our ability to react. From increasing cancer rates in Fort Chipewyan, to the declining health of the Athabasca River, to stresses on social services, Albertans now realize that the provincial government is more concerned with industry profits than the environment and the lives of Albertans.

It's time to slow down! New projects should not be allowed to proceed until you have addressed existing concerns, fully studied the cumulative impacts of development, and established limits on development to ensure Albertans will enjoy healthy and sustainable water, land, air and communities. I am calling on you to enact a moratorium on new tar sands development, and lead Albertans instead towards a clean and safe energy future that we can all live with.

Yours truly,

**cc:
The Honourable Mel Knight, Minister of Energy
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