

**Natural Resources Defense Council \* Save Union County \* Honor the Earth  
Polaris Institute \* Sierra Club U.S. \* Sierra Club of Canada \* ForestEthics  
American Bottom Conservancy \* Corporate Ethics International \* Earthworks  
Rainforest Action Network \* Council of Canadians \* International Rivers  
National Wildlife Federation \* Environmental Defence Canada \* Greenpeace Canada  
Earth Day Network \* Oil Change International \* Indigenous Environmental Network**

March 2, 2009

Lisa Jackson  
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Secretary Steven Chu  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Administrator Jackson and Secretary Chu,

We are writing to you as organizations in the United States and Canada that are concerned about the impacts of tar sands oil development on climate change regarding the Clean Energy Dialogue and Canadian Environment Minister Jim Prentice's upcoming visit to Washington.

Our voices are part of a growing concern in the U.S. and Canada among the public, cities, states, provinces, local communities and many others about the environmental and health damage of the tar sands industry. We ask that the dialogue focus on clean energy solutions and meaningful climate policies, and not on expansion of dirty fuels such as tar sands oil, and urge you to express that focus during your meetings with Minister Prentice.

The current Alberta and Canadian systems for addressing global warming are inadequate in terms of carbon reductions and we do not see stricter standards on the near horizon in either jurisdiction, despite provinces such as Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba making strides forward. Additionally, while Canada might propose a "technological" fix to the massive environmental problems posed by the tar sands oil industry, there are no ready technologies, funding, or demonstrable political commitment to cleaning up the greenhouse gas emissions, slowing the creation of toxic tailings ponds, reversing the profound impacts on First Nations communities at tar sands ground zero, or addressing the damage to the Boreal forest and migratory birds.

We urge that the Administration:

- **Focus the Clean Energy Dialogue on renewable energy and energy efficiency:** The Annex released following the meeting between the President and Prime Minister notes that "the U.S. and Canada are collaborating on energy research related to advanced biofuels, clean engines, and energy efficiency." The main focus of the dialogue should be on these environmentally sustainable efforts and expanded to include wind, solar, and other renewable fuels and on transportation solutions such as advanced batteries and high speed rail.

- **Encourage Canada to move in parallel with the U.S. on the development of meaningful climate policies:** The Canadian government's climate policies fall short in that they are based on "intensity targets" and do not include absolute reduction targets. Their stimulus package also falls far short of the U.S. stimulus package for spending on renewable energy on a per capita basis. Although several provinces have made commitments to low carbon fuel standards, the Canadian federal government and Alberta have not yet supported these. Canada should not be allowed to hide behind the "Clean Energy Dialogue" at the Copenhagen international climate meeting next December.
- **Exclude tar sands from discussion of carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology:** Arguments that tar sands expansion can go forward on the basis that CCS will "fix" its carbon footprint are not defensible. CCS would likely only reduce 10-20% of the overall greenhouse gases associated with its total lifecycle emissions making it still dirtier than conventional fuel, and it is fraught with technical challenges. A 2008 Canadian government CCS task force found that "only a small portion of the CO2 streams are currently amenable for CCS." This is because facilities in the tar sands are diverse and geographically dispersed requiring the construction of a massive infrastructure. There are also substantial transportation emissions associated with production, many of the carbon streams are not pure enough to capture adequately, and we are only starting to understand the greenhouse gas emissions from tar sands that are associated with land use change. CCS also does not address the myriad of other environmental challenges in the tar sands nor does it address the issue of downstream combustion emissions.

As you work on these issues and discuss them with your Canadian colleagues, we are happy to provide additional information and input. For more information, please contact Susan Casey-Lefkowitz, NRDC at [selefkowitz@nrdc.org](mailto:selefkowitz@nrdc.org) or 202-289-2366.

Sincerely,

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CC

Secretary Kenneth Salazar  
Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton  
White House Energy and Climate Change Coordinator Carol Browner  
CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley  
Senator John Kerry