

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Major environmental groups praise initiative from premiers at climate summit but press for urgent action on tar sands so efforts not undermined

14 April 2015 (Quebec City) - Environmental groups from across Canada are pleased to see some of Canada's provincial premiers working together to tackle the critical issue of climate change and that the provinces recognize the importance of moving towards a low carbon economy and of putting a price on carbon. The groups are excited some provinces are already moving forward with ambitious goals to reduce absolute levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and transition away from fossil fuel dependency.

Though recognizing the climate leadership of some provinces, Canadian environmental groups want all premiers to realize that despite their ambitious goals, Canada will continue to lag behind as long as we fail to have a national climate strategy that halts the expected rise in GHG pollution from the tar sands, the fastest growing source of GHGs in the country.

"While the rest of the provinces are trying to bail out the ship, Alberta's rampant emissions continue to poke holes in the hull," said Mike Hudema, Climate and Energy Campaigner at Greenpeace. "Scientists have told us what we need to do when it comes to the tar sands: over 85 per cent of the reserves need to remain in the ground in order for Canada to be able to do its fair share in combating the growing climate crisis. We need climate leaders across the country to say no to tar sands pipelines and yes to helping Canada's most polluting province make the green transition."

A report released today by the Pembina Institute shows the growing emissions that would result from green lighting the Energy East tar sand pipeline. Last week a report by Environmental Defence and Greenpeace demonstrated that if we allow carbon pollution from the tar sands to grow, Herculean efforts will be required in other provinces to meet Canada's climate commitments. The report showed that climate pollution in Alberta is growing so quickly that Alberta's emissions could approach those of Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec combined by 2020.

"It's a basic question of fairness," said Steven Guilbeault, Deputy Director with Equiterre. "Why would provincial leaders adopt an energy strategy that allows Alberta to grow its pollution, when so much effort is being taken to reduce it elsewhere? Quebec won't stand for more tar sands pipelines. We saw more than 25,000 people say that on Saturday and they will continue saying that until our government rejects tar sands expansion once and for all."

"Provinces like Ontario, Quebec that want to be climate leaders should include a climate test in the energy strategy. Any proposed energy projects that significantly increase carbon pollution should be rejected in favour of clean energy development," said Dale Marshall, National Program Manager with Environmental Defence. "New energy projects will be approved or not based on whether they pass or fail the climate test. The proposed Energy East pipeline and other high-carbon projects would fail this test."

The Premiers will gather again in St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador in July 2015 where they will hopefully enshrine the concept of transitioning away from fossil fuels into a Canadian Climate and Energy Strategy.

On behalf of:

Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique (AQLPA)

Climate Action Network-Réseau Action Climat Canada

Ecology Action Center

Environmental Defence

Équiterre

Greenpeace Canada

Nature Québec

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-30-

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