

Facts On Canada's Oil Sands

The development of Canada's oil sands has unique challenges associated with impacts on air, water and land. As Canadian Oil Sands Trust, the largest owner in Syncrude Canada, we share the view that the right balance must be struck between improving environmental performance in the oil sands while providing economic benefits and energy security. The facts and figures below provide key points on these subject areas to help shape an informed discussion about the oil sands.

ENVIRONMENT

The oil sands industry operates under some of the most stringent and comprehensive regulations in the world. This regulatory framework will drive further improvement in environmental performance in the oil sands. As well, governments and industry are investing in new technologies to reduce environmental impacts.

Air

- Air quality in Fort McMurray is **better than major North American cities**; it is monitored 24/7/365 throughout the oil sands region.
- The oil sands industry accounts for 5% of Canada's total Greenhouse Gas Emissions and **0.1%** or 1/1000th of **global emissions**.
- The oil sands industry has reduced GHG emissions per barrel by **39%** since 1990.
- GHG emissions from oil sands crude is comparable to other sources of oil on a life cycle basis and is actually lower than oil from California or Nigeria.

Water

- All existing and approved oil sands projects will draw less than 3% of the average annual flow of the Athabasca River, one of the least utilized river basins in Alberta. Today, these projects use less than **1%** of the river's flow. Water allocations are strictly controlled during low flow periods.
- More than 80% of water drawn by the oil sands industry from the Athabasca River is recycled.
- Hydrocarbons found in the Athabasca River occur naturally in the water.
- Government testing by Alberta Environment since the 1970s and studies by RAMP – a science based, multi-stakeholder monitoring program – has shown that oil sands development has **not affected the overall water quality** of the Athabasca River.

Land

- The mineable area of the oil sands represents about **0.2% of Canada's boreal forest**. The area currently being mined is about 530 km² – less than 10% the size of metropolitan Toronto.
- Oil sands developers are **required by law to reclaim** the land they disturb; about 65 km² is currently being reclaimed.
- A land reclamation plan must be approved by the Alberta government as part of the project approval, and then re-approved every 10 years.
- Wildlife activity on reclaimed areas is similar to that found in undisturbed boreal forest.

ENERGY

The oil sands are a strategic resource that will contribute to energy security for Canada and the world for decades to come.

- Global energy demand is expected to double by 2030; all forms of energy – from unconventional sources such as the oil sands to renewables – will be needed.
- With 170 billion barrels recoverable, the oil sands are the **2nd largest source** of oil in the world.
- Oil sands produce 1.3 million barrels per day, or about **50% of total oil production** in Canada.
- Oil sands represent **97% of Canada's future oil** resources.
- Production from Canada's oil sands is poised to become the number one source of U.S. crude oil imports in 2010.

ECONOMY

The development of the oil sands is a crucial economic driver contributing substantial employment and GDP in Canada and abroad.

- Today, more than 456,000 jobs in Canada are linked to the oil sands.
- Over the next 25 years the industry will contribute **\$1.7 trillion to Canada's GDP** – \$68 billion and 500,000 jobs per year.
- Oil sands development will generate at least \$306 billion in royalty and tax revenues for Canada's federal and provincial governments.

Sources:

[Life Cycle Analysis of North American and Imported Crude Oils](#), Jacobs Consultancy and TIAX LLC, July 2009.

[Economic Impacts of the Petroleum Industry in Canada](#), Canadian Energy Research Institute, July 2009.

[The Role of Canadian Oil Sands in U.S. Oil Supply](#), IHS CERA, May 2010.

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)

Environment Canada

Oil Sands Developers Group

To learn more facts about the oil sands or to provide feedback, please visit:

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