

What TransCanada is Not Telling You About Energy East

1. Benefit to Eastern Canada is doubtful.

- Most of the diluted bitumen or “dilbit” would be shipped to foreign markets. Eastern refineries do not have the capacity to process enough crude for eastern Canadian markets and there is no demonstrated intention to change this. It is more lucrative to ship dilbit elsewhere. The main beneficiaries will be the tar sands industry, TransCanada Pipelines and operators of eastern ports. Even now, most of the oil and gas coming from Atlantic Canadian sources is exported, while residents rely on imported energy.
- And what benefit is there for all the communities the dilbit passes through? Maybe some extra jobs during construction, or after the inevitable spills.
- On another front, natural gas distributors are very concerned that gas will become less available when more pipes become dilbit transporters, pushing up natural gas prices in Eastern Canada. Already TransCanada has been demanding changes to the gas distributors’ contracts.

2. Canadian regulations are lax.

- The Harper government’s omnibus bills of 2012, as well as massive staff cuts to on-the-ground monitors, wiped out any meaningful environmental regulation or oversight.

- The National Energy Board, whose members are appointed by the same oil-friendly government, is supposedly the overseer of pipelines. It recently instituted drastic restrictions on the ability of ordinary citizens to make submissions to its hearings. Not only that, but even if the NEB issued unquestionably wise decisions, the new law allows for those decisions to be overturned by Harper’s cabinet.

3. TransCanada’s priority is profits.

- Like any large corporation, TransCanada’s first consideration is short term profits. Its record on safety, like that of the whole oil industry, shows a devil-may-care attitude. A whistle-blowing TransCanada engineer stated publicly that the corporation was consistently placing budget and schedule considerations ahead of pipeline quality and integrity. In its first year of operating the Keystone pipeline (precursor to Keystone XL), twelve spills occurred, one of which allowed nearly 80,000 litres to escape. When the same pipeline was being built, an inspector witnessed the use of cheap steel that was prone to cracking, poorly spaced rebar, sloppy concrete jobs, and fudged pressure testing. And we mustn’t forget Northwestern Ontario gas explosions from leaks in TransCanada’s pipeline at Beardmore in 2011, Stewart Lake in 1996 and Vermilion Bay in 1995. What sort of a mess would there be if similar breaks in the pipe spilled dilbit?

4. Dilbit is a gooey, corrosive, toxic stew.

- The present decades-old pipeline was constructed to transport natural gas.
- Dilbit (diluted bitumen) is a vastly different substance: a mixture of thick tar-like bitumen and a diluent whose exact components are not revealed to the public. Typically the diluent is a by-product of the natural gas industry (condensate) consisting mainly of volatile hydrocarbons, one of which is the carcinogen, benzene. The mixture tends to be acidic, therefore corrosive, and it often contains toxic hydrogen sulfide. The bitumen, even without the diluent, contains an unknown soup of chemicals.
- To move it along the pipeline, dilbit requires more pressure than gas. How can we believe that the old gas pipes are up to the task? The National Petroleum Council in the United States stated, “...pipelines operating outside of their design parameters... are at the greatest risk of integrity issues...”
- When dilbit spills, the mixture separates into its components. The volatile compounds evaporate and the heavy bitumen smothers life on the ground and under water. It does not float. The spill in the Kalamazoo River gave us a graphic demonstration. The cleanup process there remains incomplete years later.
- Pristine water bodies are everywhere in Northwestern Ontario. If Energy East is allowed to proceed, how are they protected?

5. The tar sands industry is an ultimate destroyer.

- Bitumen producers and transporters, along with their sponsor, the Harper government, have flaunted themselves shamelessly as job providers and economic stimulators. Yet Harper's big push for big bitumen comes from the pockets of regular Canadians, and it inhibits development in other sectors, especially alternative energy. Tar sands industries also destroy and threaten vital enterprises that rely on a clean environment such as fisheries, farming and tourism.
- Bitumen production is a proven polluter on a massive scale. It has reduced huge tracts of boreal forest to a wasteland. Toxins have travelled long distances from the extraction process. First Nations downstream from tar sands operations are suffering from previously unheard of cancers. Uncontrolled spills are happening more frequently than ever. A recent detailed and peer-reviewed survey found that thousands of environmental infractions in Alberta were hidden from the public and the applicable rules left unenforced.
- The process of producing usable oil from tar sands bitumen is the most wasteful of any kind of oil production. Vast quantities of much cleaner, more efficient natural gas are burned away to heat the tar sands goop in order to separate out the bitumen, which in turn requires even more energy input for the final refining

process. Scientists have calculated that the cost of energy from bitumen far outweighs the benefits, especially if environmental costs are considered.

- Even if all these quite tangible ill effects could magically be controlled, we still have the hard and fast fact that bitumen quite literally adds more fuel to the fires of climate change. As even staid organizations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have agreed, atmospheric carbon dioxide is fast approaching levels where runaway climate change cannot be stopped. The tar sands, the Harper government and TransCanada's Energy East project cannot be allowed to continue to take us down this suicidal road.

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- Promoters of this project have called it a *no-brainer*. True, indeed, in a sense not intended.

* Multiple sources for information in this brochure can be found in documents at canadians.org/energyeast. Other sources are a CBC News report on the Beardmore explosion in 2011, a May 2013 Financial Post article on concerns of eastern gas distributors, a July 2013 Winnipeg Free Press account of multiple unenforced environmental infractions, and a Feb 2013 article on bitumen efficiency at insideclimatenews.org.

Excellent sources of information are at notranscanadapipeline.com and canadians.org/energyeast

Our CUSP site is sustainableplanet.ca

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from the folks at
**Citizens United for a Sustainable Planet
(CUSP)**

- First, please take note of the way TransCanada is running their “open house” events. Unless things suddenly change, our local event is likely to be like the one described below.
- *I attended the Energy East open house in my New Brunswick village last night. It suddenly dawned on me why they use that format instead of a real meeting where opinions and questions can be expressed openly, for all to see and hear. Instead, they have dozens of representatives talking privately to attendees, there is even a sort of cocktail party atmosphere. You have to register and agree that photos may be taken...*

-- Gina B. in *Island Tides*, Sept 12, 2013