



Women & Climate Change – Canadian Facts

Climate Impacts

- Canada and Venezuela have the largest petroleum deposits and Alberta's oilsands are the most developed (Pembina.org)
- Tar Sands underlie 140,200 square kilometres. As of 2012, the Alberta government has granted oil sands extraction leases covering 92,000 km² which accounts for almost 65% of the total oil sands area stripping Boreal forests and wetlands.
- The Government of Canada has thus far failed to meet its constitutional obligations to consult First Nations on West Coast pipelines (McCarthy & Vanderklippe, September 28 2012).
- Last month, Ottawa cancelled almost 3,000 environmental reviews on proposed development projects across the country, many of which involved tar sands oil extraction (Jonathan Kaiman, The Guardian UK, September 14, 2012).
- B.C. opposition to the Northern Gateway [pipeline] proposal was at 46 per cent in mid-December [2011], but rose to 65 per cent in a sampling Aug. 1 by Forum Research (McCarthy & Vanderklippe, September 28 2012)
- Given that the vast majority of communities living downstream from tar sands and most impacted by the pollution are First Nations communities, the tar sands have been called an “environmental genocide” by indigenous peoples
- Oil sands operations are removing large amounts of water from the Athabasca River, restrict[ing] access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds for the First Nations communities, activities protected under Treaty 8

Social Impacts

- Development of the oil sands region has sent the population of Fort McMurray soaring from just over 1,000 in the late 1960s (RJ Earley, 2003) to over 77,000 in 2012 (Josh Wingrove, The Globe & Mail, June 25 2012)
- Along with this dramatic increase in population have come many of the effects associated, including:
 1. Inflation
 2. Extreme housing shortages
 3. Labour shortages
 4. Family stress
 5. Drug and alcohol abuse
 6. Increased crime (RJ Earley, 2003)
- In Alberta's tar sands region...rates of sexual violence towards women have increased and women working in the industry have reported sexual harassment and gender discrimination (Emma Pullman, HuffPost Canada)
- With expansion of the tar sands industry, instances of domestic violence in Fort McMurray have spiraled upwards, and few women have safe places to go, forcing many to return home to their abusers. (Emma Pullman, HuffPost Canada)
- In 2010, Fort McMurray's single women's shelter became so overcrowded that the executive director held a three-week hunger strike to draw attention to its desperate need for greater support (Elaine Zuckerman, HuffPost Green, May 21 2012)
 - Between Nov. 1, 2011, and May 31, 2012, the Fort McMurray region dealt with 1,314 cases of addictions and mental health treatment – up about 19 per cent from 1,100 in the same time period the previous year (Josh Wingrove, The Globe & Mail, June 25 2012)
 - Gender-based discrimination has resulted in unequal access to higher paying jobs in communities in the region
 - With skyrocketing housing prices and costs of living, there is unequal access to housing
 - Increases in female homelessness exemplifies the challenges faced by women in the area

Health Impacts

- The Alberta Health Services reported on the incidence of cancer in Fort Chipewyan and found:
 - A 30% increase in cancers over the last 12 years
 - Leukemias and lymphomas were increased by 3-fold
 - Bile duct cancers were increased by 7-fold
 - Other cancers, such as soft tissue sarcomas, and lung cancers in women, were also elevated (“NRDC, “The Other Oil Disaster, Cancer and Canada’s Tar Sands,” May 3, 2010”)