

## Press Release

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# Mackenzie Pipeline to fuel America's Gas Tank

Ottawa--A new deal to build a pipeline across northern Alberta means that the Mackenzie pipeline is just phase one of a megaproject to extract and export more tar sands oil to the United States say Sierra Club of Canada and Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. News of the deal between TransCanada Pipelines and the Dene Tha' First Nation of northern Alberta to build the 230 km. Northcentral Crossing Pipeline was released last week.

"This deal means that the sole function of the Mackenzie pipeline is to supply natural gas to extract oil from the Athabasca tar sands, the world's dirtiest source of oil," says Elizabeth May, executive director of Sierra Club of Canada. "Canada could blow its chance of meeting its Kyoto targets if it allows tar sands production of greenhouse gas emissions to increase from 17 megatonnes in 1990 to the projected 70 megatonnes in 2010. Tar sands projects would then represent the largest total single addition to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions representing 9 per cent of Canada's total in 2010."

The news gives a different complexion to the environmental assessment of the Mackenzie gas pipeline project, which is expected to be referred to a joint panel review in June. "If Mackenzie gas were to displace coal burned in electricity-generating plants or diesel oil burned to heat homes, an argument could be made that the pipeline could make a positive contribution to meeting Canada's Kyoto commitments" says Karen Wristen, Executive Director of Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. "Now that we know that the gas will be burned just to heat up the tar sands to extract oil, it's a different case entirely. We have to look at the climate change and air quality implications of the end use of Mackenzie gas during the environmental review."

The direct link between the Mackenzie pipeline and tar sands expansion also has a bearing on another important part of the environmental review – the need for the pipeline project. "Canadians need to ask themselves whether we want to put at risk this magnificent river ecosystem and the wildlife and people that depend on it in order to increase oil exports to the United States," says Ms May.

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America's Gas Tank: <http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/programs/atmosphere-energy/climate-change/americas-gas-tank.pdf>