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45,000 Americans and Canadians Lend Support to President Obama:

We Must Get New Energy Economy Right - Tar Sands Too Dirty

U.S./Canada- Today, an international network of environmental groups announced that there has been overwhelming response to a cross-border campaign urging President Barack Obama to keep moving forward on his new energy economy agenda and say "no" to the tar sands, the dirtiest, most energy-intensive source of oil on the planet.

Roughly 45,000 petitions were signed in the U.S. and Canada in just the last several days. On February 19, President Obama travels to Canada on his first presidential visit abroad, where he will face pressure from the Government of Canada to support production of Alberta tar sands oil.

"A clean energy economy is essential for tackling global warming and creating much-needed sustainable jobs. Tens of thousands of people across North America have voiced their concern that tar sands oil will take us in exactly the wrong direction." said Sierra Club dirty fuels campaign coordinator Pat Gallagher. "President Obama has made clean energy a key part of his economic recovery package. He's already taking steps to cut global warming emissions from coal plants and cars. Dirty tar sands oil has no place in his vision for a clean energy economy."

The groups behind the campaign believe that the environment and the economy are not mutually exclusive, and support Obama's clean energy vision, which suggests that investing in a green future can improve and stabilize U.S. and Canadian economies while putting people in both countries to work.

Says Mike Hudema of Greenpeace, "We can have a clean environment and a healthy economy. What we can't do is green the tar sands, the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas pollution in Canada. We shouldn't be putting our kids and grandkids at risk by increasing production of dirty oil when we need to be cleaning our energy supply on both sides of the border."

President Obama has vowed to implement a national low carbon fuel standard, impose caps on total greenhouse gas emissions, and initiate a transition to a renewable energy future for the U.S. In contrast, Canada has no regulations to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and the federal government's climate change plan would allow total pollution from the tar sands to increase almost 70 percent by 2020. In 2009, the Canadian government cut funding for climate change research and support for renewable energy.

"President Obama recognizes that we have a shared future, that we can not tackle energy issues in isolation. Clearly, his clean energy economy agenda, focusing on developing technologies that tap alternative sources of energy while

containing the environmental damage of fossil fuels, is the direction we rapidly need to move in." said Merran Smith of ForestEthics.

Despite hopes that carbon capture and storage (CCS) can solve the problem, recent reports commissioned by the Governments of Alberta and Canada show that just a small percentage of the carbon dioxide released in the tar sands could be captured through this unproven technology. The network wants to ensure that any cross-border cap and trade system includes hard caps on emissions and no loop-holes or special treatment for dirty, dangerous and expensive sources of oil like the tar sands.

Producing oil from tar sands emits three times the global warming pollution as conventional oil, requires excessive amounts of energy and fresh water, and destroys huge swaths of boreal forest.

Prior to Obama's visit to Canada, environmental groups conducted a wide variety of outreach, including running newspaper ads in the U.S., launching a new website, educating Americans and Canadians about the urgency of stopping tar sands, and urging North Americans to sign letters and petitions to Prime Minister Harper and President Obama. Today, a group of over 50 prominent Canadians also signed an open letter telling Obama that the tar sands don't fit in the new energy economy.

More information, including a list of campaign partners, photos, B-roll video and other campaign materials are available at: www.obama2canada.org

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