

# TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline Our Risk – Their Reward

by Andrea Harden-Donahue



When TransCanada announced its Energy East pipeline last July, the Council of Canadians responded swiftly with plans to build a national campaign against this pipeline proposal.

## We now know a number of things about the Energy East pipeline:

■ It would be the biggest oil pipeline in North America, dwarfing the controversial Keystone XL and Northern Gateway pipelines.

■ It would contribute 30 to 32 million tonnes of climate pollution every year. This is the equivalent of doubling the annual emissions of all the cars in Ontario, and is more pollution than any single Atlantic province generates.

■ It would represent a 40 per cent increase in tar sands production. Downstream First Nation communities have demanded that federal and provincial governments honour treaty rights and stop the expansion of the tar sands.

■ Almost 1 million of the pipeline's 1.1 million barrels expected to be shipped daily would likely be destined for export to the U.S., Europe, India and China.

■ It would put water at risk. The pipeline would cross a number of significant waterways that supply drinking water to millions of people. The waterways include Shoal Lake, Trout Lake watershed, the Oxford Aquifer, the Rideau River, the Saint John River Basin and the St. Lawrence River. It would jeopardize a beluga whale habitat near Rivière-du-Loup in Quebec and would double – or even triple – supertanker traffic in the Bay of Fundy, home of the world's highest tides. The pipeline

could be extended through Nova Scotia to the shores of Cape Breton.

The Council of Canadians has been part of the growing movement against Energy East.

TransCanada has filed its application with the National Energy Board outlining the details of the pipeline route. This spring TransCanada will host a second round of open houses. The Council will release some new and exciting social media tools for the campaign and we will continue to fill windows with “Energy East: Our Risk – Their Reward” window signs. We are also gearing up for another National Day of Action on May 10.

Ontario is emerging as a key battleground for the campaign. Provincial Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli asked the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) to review the provincial implications of the pipeline. While the OEB will not make the final decision on the pipeline, the results will influence Ontario's position before the National Energy Board. The consultations provide an important opportunity to convince the Ontario government to oppose Energy East.

And there is good reason for the Ontario government to reject the project given the heightened risks to Ontarians. The pipeline conversion would effectively cut off Ontario's access to western natural gas. This will force the province to increasingly rely on fracked gas imports from the United States. Fracked gas is an extreme form of energy which is causing serious environmental impacts and has a carbon footprint as large as coal. Given the strong likelihood that the Marcellus shale will come under increasingly strict

environmental regulations, there are big concerns about rising costs of heating homes in Ontario.

## Pipeline plans

For the 2,000 km route through Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, including up and over the Great Lakes, TransCanada plans to repurpose a 40-year-old natural gas pipeline to ship oil.

The Energy East pipeline would transport diluted bitumen, or “dilbit,” a highly toxic substance created by mixing thick tar sands bitumen with toxic chemicals that make it thin enough to pump through a pipeline. A federal government report recently confirmed that dilbit sinks when mixed with sediment, which would make waterway cleanup efforts extremely difficult. This is consistent with the experience of the massive dilbit spill in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where more than \$1 billion has been spent on cleanup efforts but the river is still polluted.

The Council of Canadians is participating as a stakeholder in the OEB review. We are submitting reports on both the water impacts of the Energy East pipeline and the natural gas supply implications. In April, we coordinated a six-city speaking and lobbying tour in Ontario featuring Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow and Eriel Deranger of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation to mobilize local campaigns and encourage participation at the OEB.

For more campaign updates, visit [www.noenergyeast.ca](http://www.noenergyeast.ca).

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