

# Energy East Pipeline Will Spill – It's just a matter of when, where and how much

When it comes to pipelines, it is not a matter of whether a pipeline will spill, it is a matter of when, where and how much it will spill.

TransCanada's Energy East pipeline project would convert an aging natural gas pipeline to carry crude oil from Saskatchewan to Ontario, connecting it with new pipeline through Quebec and on to Saint John, New Brunswick. It would be the largest oil pipeline in North America, transporting 1.1 million barrels of oil every day.

## Canadian pipelines have a 99.99 per cent safety record, right?

TransCanada claims a 99.99 per cent pipeline safety record in Canada. The federal government also likes to promote this figure. This is a simple play on numbers. Of all the oil shipped in Canada by pipeline, 99.99 per cent of it reaches its destination while only 0.01 per cent spills.

## But here are some other figures you should know:

- Pipeline incidents have doubled in the last decade.

- Cracking, equipment or component failure, and material, manufacturing or construction flaws have been the most frequent reasons for pipeline spills of more than 1,500 litres.

- Safety-related incidents – from fires to spills – rose from one for every 1,000 km of pipeline to two. Energy East would be 4,400 kilometres long and could have as many as nine incidents every year based on this average.

- 0.01 per cent of Energy East's capacity is 6.4 million litres of oil spilled every year.

## What would a spill from Energy East look like?

Based on information provided at TransCanada's Energy East open houses,

TransCanada is aiming for a 10-minute pipeline spill response time. With the pipeline's total capacity at 1.1 million barrels of crude per day, Energy East would transport 1,893 litres of oil per second. This means more than 1 million litres could spill in 10 minutes. A huge amount of oil remaining in the pipeline between valves could also leak. For example, at the Nipigon River crossing of the current natural gas pipeline, there is a distance of 11.8 km between valve stations. This means up to 11 million litres of additional oil could leak.

## A pipeline system with an explosive history

On January 25, 2014, a TransCanada-owned natural gas pipeline ruptured in Otterburne, Manitoba, sending balls of flame 300 metres high. The rupture created a crater 10 feet deep, and left 4,000 natural gas customers in the cold for several days. The cause of the rupture is under investigation. In February, TransCanada made headlines again when one of its natural gas pipelines ruptured near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.

The explosion near Otterburne happened in a pipeline that is part of the TransCanada's Mainline System. This system of pipeline includes pipe TransCanada is seeking to convert to carry crude oil for Energy East.

The Otterburne and Rocky Mountain House ruptures were two of 10 incidents that occurred on the Mainline System between 1991 and 2013. These incidents were found to be largely the result of stress corrosion cracking, external corrosion, and coating and welding failures, suggesting the pipeline was poorly designed, poorly built and poorly maintained.

## Faulty leak detection systems

Days before the now infamous Enbridge



More than 400 people attended the North Bay stop of the Council of Canadians' "Our Risk – Their Reward" Energy East tour. The tour visited six Ontario communities. An Atlantic tour is planned for this fall.

pipeline spill of more than 3.8 million litres of diluted bitumen in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the pipeline's operator said it would remotely detect a spill in eight minutes.

It was 17 hours before Enbridge confirmed the massive Kalamazoo spill, which has now cost more than \$1 billion dollars to clean up.

In fact, the general public is far more likely to discover a pipeline rupture than a company's leak detection system. Looking at 10 years of federal data in the U.S., an investigative journalist found that remote sensors detected only 5 per cent of spills. Only one of the eight ruptures on TransCanada's mainline system, which includes the pipeline slated for conversion, was discovered by a detection system. The others were discovered by staff, an OPP officer and the general public.

The Energy East pipeline will cross or run near some of Canada's most precious waters, including at least 90 watersheds and 961 waterways. From drinking water sources to valued fishing, tourist and recreational waters, to a beluga habitat in the Bay of Fundy, an enormous amount of Canada's water would be at risk of a pipeline spill.

Energy East is our risk and TransCanada's reward.

Find out more about the campaign to stop Energy East on our website at [www.canadians.org/energyeast](http://www.canadians.org/energyeast).