



Ontario Humanist Society

Supporting Humanist Communities

March 04, 2011

Subject: Reduce Subsidies to Tar Sand Developments

Open Letter to Prime Minister Harper and Minister Flaherty

An appeal to end special tax breaks to oil, coal and gas companies

As organizations concerned about the worsening impacts of climate change at home and around the world, as well as the need to seriously reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, we are calling on the Government of Canada to eliminate tax breaks to the companies that produce oil, gas and coal in the federal 2011 budget.

The Government of Canada provides around a billion dollars in tax breaks every year to companies producing fossil fuels, who are among the richest in the country. As the world moves towards a clean energy economy, Canada's ongoing tax breaks and subsidies to the fossil fuel sector are taking us in the wrong direction.

In an era of fiscal constraint, hundreds of millions of dollars in savings could go a long way towards meeting pressing social and environmental needs in Canada and abroad. By ending fossil fuel tax breaks, Canada would also be meeting the commitment our government made in Pittsburgh in 2009, along with other G20 leaders, to phase out subsidies and tax breaks to companies producing oil, gas and coal.

By subsidizing the companies that produce fossil fuels, the Government of Canada is encouraging greater production and facilitating the rapid expansion of the tar sands, Canada's fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas pollution. Globally, artificially low costs of fossil fuels have been shown to encourage wasteful consumption, distort energy markets, and allow for increased greenhouse gas pollution, thereby fueling the climate crisis. Subsidizing oil extraction also makes investments in oil more attractive compared to cleaner alternatives like wind and solar power, thereby further tying our economies to fossil fuels.

We would like to take this opportunity to urge the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to use the 2011 budget as an opportunity to end tax breaks for oil coal and gas companies.

Thank you for your time and attention,

ONTARIO HUMANIST SOCIETY

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