

Piece for SLACC Blog or Newsletter for start of Feb 2012:

Tar Sands and the FQD – and now: Serbian oil shale threats

Excellent news: 18th January Obama rejected TransCanada's application for the Keystone XL pipeline (for connecting the Alberta Tar Sands with the Mexican Gulf for export of tar sands fuel worldwide including to UK and the EU). But the US State Department said this does not preclude a re-application with a different route (to avoid the Ogallala aquifer). Obama stated that "The rushed and arbitrary deadline insisted on by Congressional Republicans prevented a full assessment of the pipeline's impact, especially the health and safety of the American people, as well as our environment". TransCanada announced they will re-apply. Let's hope we don't get a Republican President elected in November – as their climate denying or sceptic candidates support the KXL and most Republican Congressmen have been 'bought' by Big Oil such as by the infamous Koch Brothers (Tea Party funders & founders). [Assessment by The UK Tar Sands Network](#).

Also – Canadian First Nations are making an [effective united stand](#) against the proposed pipeline from the Tar Sands towards the Pacific (and thus China).

The FQD: EU member states are meeting on **23rd February** towards a vote on the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) – legislation that would strongly discourage tar sands fuel from entering the UK and EU. I say 'towards' – as we are unclear whether the vote might again be delayed – not just by Norman Baker's alternative methodology – but now by another alternative proposal – [this time by the Netherlands](#) (home of Royal Dutch Shell) – as another spanner in the works to derail the FQD.

More good news: Tim Farron has met Simon Hughes (former LibDem shadow for Env & CC) on the FQD and tar sands and has decided "to bid for a question to the Secretary of State on this issue at the next session of Energy and Climate Change questions in the House of Commons" and discuss it with Norman Baker. Unfortunately I have learnt that many LibDem MPs and the GreenLibDem tweeter still find it hard to believe that Norman Baker's work could scupper the FQD. I will now have to try and persuade the GreenLibDems that his actions threaten the FQD – at least by unacceptable delay, and in December [I wrote a critical assessment](#) of Norman Baker's statements which has been emailed to LibDems. We would like the GreenLibDems to support Tim Farron and Chris Davies MEP on this matter.

If you have a spare moment do [email Tim Farron](#) that you are very pleased he has decided to pursue this matter (and for signing the moratorium on fracking EDM).

One point I am emphasizing is the **urgency** for the FQD to be implemented before investment decisions (and pipeline permits) for high-carbon unconventional oil infrastructure are made – which are largely export dependent and thus influence-able by an effective FQD. A recent new example of this urgency is that "by 2012" the Serbian Government is announcing "corporate players" interested in entering the race to extract shale oil from Serbia. **Shale oil life-cycle emissions are 50% higher** than for conventional oil according to the EU Commissioner's proposal for the FQD – which Norman Baker is delaying. Also – the extraction process is highly destructive and polluting.

For more info on these subjects see www.dragonfly1.plus.com/#blog – which also links to the UK Tar Sands website and tweets.

Henry Adams, 31jan12