

Weasel Diesel?

We now have a unique opportunity with the **EU Fuel Quality Directive (FQD)** to try and restrict the trade of tar sands oil due to its significantly higher production carbon footprint than conventional oil. Unfortunately, the Conservative Canadian government, Conservative MEPs and parts of the UK government (and the Dutch government [Shell]) are ignoring known facts, even trying to suppress them, in their efforts to reverse or delay the effectiveness of the FQD. Even deception is being used:

I have received e-mails/letters from Tory MEP's which though on the surface are polite responses, nonetheless show that they are trying to deceive the UK public about the carbon footprint and environmental impact of oil from the Tar Sands, in contradiction with a peer-reviewed EU-commissioned report (p.4 below), widely accepted facts, and even a BP admission at its recent AGM:

BP's CEO "**Mr Dudley admitted that BP's methods of extracting oil sands was more polluting than conventional crude**" (FT.com),
 but Conservative MEPs state: "**SAG-D, is deep mined rather than open cast and therefore causes little environmental footprint**" [SAG-D is extraction method used by Husky-BP]. - Weasel words?

The following explains the deception, though fairly obvious, and also presents the true factual evidence:

An analysis of a Conservative deception to make the EU Fuel Quality Directive (FQD) into a totally ineffective greenwash so that Canadian Tar Sands oil can be rubber-stamped by the FQD as being of the same production-carbon-footprint as conventional oil (the latter is shown to be false)

Production-carbon-footprint is the most relevant part of life-cycle carbon footprint in comparing tar sands oil with conventional oil.

If you want to skip the details – focus on points in bold:
3 and 6 are the main problem points used to support the Tory position in 7

	Email from Conservative MEP Jacqueline Foster (exact words – but I've made some bold)	My analysis and explanation (MEP's url: jacqueline.foster@europarl.europa.eu)
1	From: FOSTER Jacqueline Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 11:13 AM To: Henry Adams Subject: RE: [SPAM SUSPECTED] Strong concern about CETA and the Tar Sands Dear Mr. Adams, Thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding the Canadian oil sands.	I received an email with essentially the same statements from the assistant of another Conservative MEP, thus J. Foster's statements may have been written originally by another member of the Conservative Group of MEPs. CETA = Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and EU. (= a potential Trojan Horse – with an associated big environmental / carbon hoofprint and potentially dangerous increased powers to big-business) – under current negotiation. FQD = EU Fuel Quality Directive – which aims to reduce production-carbon-footprint. I used the words "tar sands" in my e-mail to her, as it is descriptive of the tar-like viscosity of the type of oil that is found (which is strictly-speaking bitumen not tar). "oil sands" is strictly-speaking slightly more correct – but can give the impression to the public that what is extracted is like conventional crude oil rather than bitumen (bitumen needs to be melted to flow, and then more processing to become transportable & usable).
2	The Canadian oil sands are not a new fuel resource, as Canada has been extracting oil from this source for more than fifty years.	Though true – this statement is used unqualified so as to create a false impression of nothing new to worry about. Certainly oil has been extracted from Canada's Tar Sands over many decades – but it must be added that the extraction rates have hugely increased over the recent decade as compared with previous decades.

<p>3</p>	<p>Moreover, the new form of extraction, SAG-D, is deep mined rather than open cast and therefore causes little environmental footprint.</p>	<p><<< Weasel words – which use ambiguity in the expression “environmental footprint” – as to whether it is in the narrow sense (local environment) or the broad sense (to include production-carbon-footprint). It is the production-carbon-footprint that concerns the FQD.</p> <p>SAGD (Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage) – which incidentally is the method that BP/Husky favour for the Canadian Tar Sands - very definitely does <i>not</i> cause “little environmental footprint” in the broad sense – because although the initial bitumen extraction process causes less than the 100% destruction visual impact of the open-cast – nonetheless it has a huge carbon footprint because large quantities of natural gas are consumed to heat water into the steam required to melt the bitumen out of the tar sands strata. This is followed by added energy etc to upgrade the bitumen into a less viscous (& less contaminated) and thus more transportable (and refinable) state. (And that’s just part of the problem). [See EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE section on p.4 for carbon footprint]</p> <p>Financial Times’s Kiran Stacey, in his FT blog article “Winners and losers from BP AGM” (April 14, 2011) states re BP’s CEO: “Mr Dudley admitted that BP’s methods of extracting oil sands was more polluting than conventional crude”.</p> <p>The Co-operative’s “Save the caribou” report (ref. below) shows the severe impact of in-situ (SAGD) infrastructure (see aerial photo & data) on Woodland caribou populations.</p> <p>Tar sands bitumen also comes from open-cast (strip-mining) – that results in extensive habitat destruction and pollution in Alberta (and is also a threat elsewhere e.g. of TOTAL destruction of parts of Madagascar). SAGD is not “new” – it has been operating for about a decade. The older in situ method is the even less efficient CSS (Cyclic Steam Stimulation).</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>It is important to emphasise that Canada does not currently export tar-sands derived fuel into the European Union, and nor does it plan to in the foreseeable future.</p>	<p>FALSE – “Tar sands in your tank” (refs appended) shows that petroleum products partly derived from the tar sands <i>have</i> been imported into the EU, primarily as diesel from the US Gulf Coast. The Keystone XL pipeline would hugely increase this capability.</p> <p>If the Con. paragraph 4 is taken (hypothetically) to be the case - why should it matter so much to Canada that the Fuel Quality Directive puts Tar Sands Oil in the same - or a different category as conventional oil as regards its production-carbon-footprint? (the same being false and dishonest, different being true and honest).</p> <p>Canada would of course like the EU to rubber-stamp tar sands oil as having been “passed” by the FQD as being of similar carbon footprint as conventional oil, and thus for EU to be complicit in a deception on behalf of Canada. I have been informed by Chris Davies MEP (LibDem, NW England) that “The Canadian concern is not so much that export to Europe would be in danger – almost all Canadian tar sand oil is exported to the US – but rather that US legislation would adopt the EU approach. That is why Canada is lobbying quite heavily in Brussels on this issue.”</p> <p>This may be Canada’s immediate main concern, however it is obvious that Canada would also like to politically-enable export to Europe in advance of when the new tar sands oil pipeline (Keystone XL) reaches the Mexican Gulf refineries – which will facilitate easier bulk transport to the EU, at a time of declining conventional oil (and hence increasing oil prices) and an EU market for diesel that the US Gulf refineries would like to supply. If the Conservatives are successful with this deception it will influence the</p>

		US government to decide <i>for</i> the Keystone XL pipeline and could also threaten to muddle any future global climate discussions, or facilitate environmentally-damaging trade agreements or deals with other countries or whatever, and form one part of a web of “greenwash” deception of the public.
5	The sole current market for fuel from the oil sands is the United States, although there are plans to export oil to the Far East in the future.	Re “plans to export [Tar Sands] oil to the Far East in the future” – This is another environmental threat: RBS is using our bailout money to finance Enbridge to build a pipeline for this: Enbridge are renowned for allowing pollution leaks from their pipes – and the proposed pipe if/when it leaks is highly likely to pollute pure rivers in Canada and harm wild salmon populations important for indigenous Canadians. (see my website www.dragonfly1.plus.com eg link re financing...).
6	As regards the Fuel Quality Directive (2009/30/EC), the Canadian government is not asking for any special recognition of their oil, merely for it to be treated the same as other sources of oil around the world.	<<< Totally FALSE – as shown by 3 above. 3 unravels the Conservative argument. - Because 3 shows that the Canadian government <i>is</i> asking <i>more</i> than a “special recognition” for its Tar Sands oil to be treated the same as other sources of oil around the world as regards the Fuel Quality Directive, and the word “merely” gives a false impression, because Tar Sands oil has a much higher carbon footprint than conventional oil even if it is obtained using SAGD instead of open-cast or primitive steam methods. If Tar Sands oil is lumped in with conventional oil in the FQD it will make the FQD meaningless as regards its aim to reduce carbon emissions – and even worse it will become a deceitful sham or greenwash – to create a false picture.
7	Therefore, I do not support the suspension of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement on the grounds that Canada is trying to 'force' tar-sands oil into the European Union.	“Therefore” is now shown to be invalid. Whether Canada is trying to ‘force’ or not, it is trying to make it possible, and threaten the other consequences listed above.
8	Thank you again for taking the time to contact me. I hope that you have found this information useful. Yours Sincerely, Jacqueline Foster MEP	It certainly provides written evidence that the Cons are trying to deceive the public. An Indian out of a classic Western would say “They speak with a forked tongue”. I wonder what equivalent the indigenous people would say now.

Apologies to weasels and snakes for the comparison!

MY INITIAL RESPONSE (on 28 March 2011) - to which no answer (so I followed it up [emails appended after References])

Dear Jacqueline Foster MEP,

Many thanks for your reply.

To avoid any confusion, can you please explain regarding your sentence on SAG-D whether by "environment footprint" you mean:

1. in the narrow sense - just the environmental effects on the land where the extraction is taking place (e.g. forest-removal, land & water pollution etc), or
2. in the broad sense - to include the carbon-footprint associated with the SAG-D method - including e.g. that of the gas used in producing the steam to melt the tar in situ.

This is obviously a crucial distinction here, because the Fuel Quality Directive concerns the carbon-footprint of the methods of oil extraction/production.

I would welcome a clear reply on this, as I hope to distribute and/or publish the responses of MEPs on this matter fairly soon, and this distinction is key to the rationale you present below for supporting your position.

Yours sincerely,

STRONG EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE:

NB: The EU already has good data showing that tar sands oil has a higher production carbon footprint than conventional oil, at least one source being research that they themselves commissioned – the peer-reviewed 18jan11 report by **Adam Brandt of Stanford University's** Department of Energy Resources Engineering .

Table 6 (p.37) of Brandt's report gives figures for the carbon emissions for tar sands oil and EU conventional oil which show that **the total life-cycle emissions ('well-to-wheel') of tar sands oil** (107.3 gCO₂/MJ LHV) are **23% greater than those for conventional oil**, and if you focus on the extraction process, **tar sands oil extraction emissions are 4.9 times greater than those for conventional oil**. The latter results confirm the often-stated "3 to 5 times greater".

I quote from Brandt's report:

"Importantly though, the most likely industry-average GHG emissions from oil sands are significantly higher than most likely industry-average emissions from conventional fuels." (p.2)

"GHG emissions from in situ production result primarily from fuels combusted for steam generation."(p.8) which is "generally fueled with natural gas" (p.9). "bitumen [tar sands oil in extracted form] requires more intensive upgrading and refining than conventional crude oil." (p.10), and "Land use change associated emissions: peat disturbance is a key driver of oil sands land use GHG emissions" (p.17). "Our most likely case is calculated using the current production split between mining and in situ production: Approx. 45% in-situ, Approx. 55% Mined." (p.37).

Source: Adam Brandt's 18jan11 report: "Upstream greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from Canadian oil sands as a feedstock for European refineries" Adam R. Brandt, Department of Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford University: https://circabc.europa.eu/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/db806977-6418-44db-a464-20267139b34d/Brandt_Oil_Sands_GHGs_Final.pdf

Another recent data source with the same comparative conclusion is the very readable **ICCT** report "Carbon Intensity of Crude Oil in Europe". The ICCT is The International Council on Clean Transportation, and the report can be downloaded from:

<http://www.theicct.org/2010/12/carbon-intensity-of-crude-oil-in-europe/> This links to:

http://www.theicct.org/pubs/ICCT_crudeoil_Eur_Dec2010_sum.pdf - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

http://www.theicct.org/pubs/ICCT_crudeoil_Europe_Dec2010.pdf - full report

2 quotes from EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

"Two primary drivers contribute to the highest upstream GHG emissions: the presence of high levels of flaring of natural gas, and unconventional oil such as tar sands."

"In Canada, the difference between the Steepbank and Hibernia fields shows the effect of the additional energy needed to extract tar sands: Steepbank has four times the emissions of Hibernia, a conventional oil field."

Thus – no excuse can be made that there is inadequate data to show that tar sands oil has a significantly higher carbon footprint than conventional oil.

Canada's response to the inconvenient facts in Brandt's report was to try and exclude them: According to www.transportenvironment.org "The Commission's public consultation document put fuel from tar sands at 107g [figure from Brandt's report], but this was later withdrawn after pressure from Canada." Source: <http://www.transportenvironment.org/News/2011/2/Report-for-Commission-confirms-carbon-intensity-of-tar-sands/>

My website explains some of the background to the present document:

www.dragonfly1.plus.com – increasing awareness of the importance of the tar sands

For background briefing also see www.no-tar-sands.org, and reference links below).

News updates of relevance

9 June 2011: In summary the good news is the EU resolution of 8th June, the bad news is that the UK government is still reported to be trying to block the effectiveness or delay implementation of the FQD (e.g. by an apparent reluctance to accept that there is sufficient scientific evidence to show that tar sands oil has such a significantly higher carbon footprint than conventional oil that it can be singled out to be categorized differently until full data for the emissions for extracting and processing heavy oils or heavier conventional oils have been obtained [obviously a delaying tactic – because classifying tar sands oil differently to conventional oils in no way precludes heavy oils from being classified when suitable data is made available; tar sands should be separated first and more urgently because it has the most emissions – obviously more than heavy oil because it's even heavier being bitumen]).

8 June 2011: European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2011 on EU-Canada trade relations:

Relevant section pasted here:

13. Reiterates its concern about the impact of the extraction of oil sand on the global environment due to the high level of CO2 emissions during its production process and the threat it poses to local biodiversity; expresses its belief that the CETA negotiations should not affect the EU's right to legislate in the fuel quality directive or inhibit the ability of the Canadian authorities to introduce future environmental standards concerning the extraction of oil sands; encourages both parties to resolve any disagreements amicably and without endangering the CETA negotiations;

Link to full text of resolution:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0257+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

The EU has published a summary/comment on this resolution. Here is a paste of relevant extract, followed by a link to source of this extract:

Parliament nonetheless raised some potential concerns. One was the environmental impact of extracting oil from tar sands, due to its high CO2 emissions and its local impact on biodiversity.

Extract from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110608IPR20931/html/MEPs-favour-EU-Canada-trade-deal-worry-about-seals-tar-sand-oil-and-asbestos>:

Links to comments on/re this resolution:

Council of Canadians: http://www.canadians.org/media/trade/2011/08-Jun-11.html?utm_source=UK+Tar+Sands+Campaign+List&utm_campaign=94af63c447-UK+Tar+Sands+Campaign12+2+2009&utm_medium=email

<http://www.no-tar-sands.org/2011/06/uk-is-blocking-tar-sands-progress-take-action-on-18th-june/>

A few days before the resolution:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/pollution-fears-as-uk-blocks-european-ban-on-fuel-from-tar-sands-2291598.html>

Other References

CETA threatens to undermine the FQD. Excellent description of the threats of CETA including re the FQD:

<http://www.no-tar-sands.org/2011/07/trading-blows-tar-sands-critics-in-brussels-face-off-with-canada%E2%80%99s-pr-machine/>

TAR SANDS IN YOUR TANK - EXPOSING EUROPE'S ROLE IN CANADA'S DIRTY OIL TRADE – an excellent factual report:

www.greenpeace.org.uk/files/pdfs/tar-sands-in-your-tank.pdf

Keith Taylor – Green MEP for South East England, member of the Trade Committee, wrote “Tar sands and Canada's meddling in EU affairs” in Public Service Europe, 29 July 11:

<http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/681/tar-sands-and-canadas-meddling-in-eu-affairs>

Linda McAvan MEP writes (21 June 11) a useful account of the political battle over the EU FQD re tar sands oil from a present Labour viewpoint: <http://www.tribunemagazine.co.uk/2011/06/12798/>

Linda McAvan is Labour MEP for Yorkshire & the Humber and the party's European spokesperson on the environment and climate change (I state “present Labour viewpoint” – because it's a shame that the former Labour government deliberately turned a blind eye [they put it “arm's length”] to taxpayers' bank-bailout money being invested in tar sands oil extraction by RBS).

“UK undermining Europe's tar sands ban, say campaigners (Environmentalists accuse coalition of caving in to Canada by blocking attempt to restrict controversial fuel)” Terry Macalister guardian.co.uk, 30 May 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/may/30/uk-undermining-tar-sands-ban>

“Canada's crude politics on oil sands (Stephen Harper's government, allied with big oil, is lobbying Europe not to regulate tar sands oil, but the pushback has begun)” Martin Lukacs guardian.co.uk, 31 May 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/may/31/oil-sands-oil>

<http://www.call4.org/campaigns/keep-europe-out-of-the-tar-sands/>

“EU warned fuel quality plans will increase oil emissions” 30 March 2010:

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/eu-warned-fuel-quality-plans-will-increase-oil-emissions-news-393054>

DIRECTIVE 2009/30/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2009:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:140:0088:0113:EN:PDF>

European Commission Environment – Transport & Environment – Fuel Quality Monitoring:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/transport/fuel.htm>

More info on SAGD / “in situ” extraction of bitumen etc:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada//deeptrouble> – provides link to pdf document “DEEP TROUBLE THE REALITY OF IN SITU TAR SANDS OPERATIONS (1)”

Financial Times's Kiran Stacey's FT blog article “Winners and losers from BP AGM” (April 14, 2011):

http://blogs.ft.com/energy-source/2011/04/14/winners-and-losers-from-bp-agm/?catid=456&SID=google&utm_source=UK+Tar+Sands+Campaign+List&utm_campaign=be1319fad8-UK_Tar_Sands_Campaign12_2_2009&utm_medium=email

The Co-operative's “Save the caribou” report shows the severe impact of in-situ (SAGD) infrastructure (see aerial photo & data) on Woodland caribou populations:

<http://www.co-operative.coop/savethecaribou> - links to pdf of report.

My e-mail of 18/4/11 (no reply to this yet) To Jacqueline FOSTER MEP" <jacqueline.foster@europarl.europa.eu>

Dear Jacqueline Foster MEP,

The following quote is a very relevant introduction to my question to you in the e-mail below:

Financial Times's Kiran Stacey, in his FT blog article "Winners and losers from BP AGM" (April 14, 2011) states re BP's CEO: "Mr Dudley admitted that BP's methods of extracting oil sands was more polluting than conventional crude"

-----Original Message-----

From: Henry Adams

Sent: Monday, April 18, 2011 3:17 PM

To: Jacqueline FOSTER MEP

Subject: CETA and the Tar Sands - "environment footprint" of SAGD in relation to FQD (Fuel Quality Directive)

Dear Jacqueline Foster MEP,

Please reply to my question of March 28th on the above subject (= top email appended below).

Your stated rationale in support of your position on Canadian Tar Sands oil re the FQD depends on what you mean by "environmental footprint", put simply:

whether you include in your meaning the production carbon footprint of the SAGD process (as explained in 2. in the top email below).

Surely you know what you mean?

If you don't, or are unclear yourself - e.g. because you are using a statement written by one of your colleagues in the Conservative Group in the European Parliament (and/or in the UK Government?) - then please forward this email to your relevant colleague(s) to answer.

This colleague is likely at least to be Conservative MEP Philip Bradbourn - who as Chair of the European Parliament Committee for EU relations with Canada - obviously has a duty to know why his party holds such a position!

Henry Adams,

Dr T.H.L. Adams (Ecological Consultant)

henryadams@dragonfly1.plus.com

Kendal, Cumbria

-----Original Message-----

From: Henry Adams

Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 11:57 AM

To: FOSTER Jacqueline

Subject: Re: [SPAM SUSPECTED] Strong concern about CETA and the Tar Sands

Dear Jacqueline Foster MEP,

Many thanks for your reply.

To avoid any confusion, can you please explain regarding your sentence on SAG-D whether by "environment footprint" you mean:

1. in the narrow sense - just the environmental effects on the land where the extraction is taking place (e.g. forest-removal, land & water pollution etc), or 2. in the broad sense - to include the carbon-footprint associated with the SAG-D method - including e.g. that of the gas used in producing the steam to melt the tar in situ.

This is obviously a crucial distinction here, because the Fuel Quality Directive concerns the carbon-footprint of the methods of oil extraction/production.

I would welcome a clear reply on this, as I hope to distribute and/or publish the responses of MEPs on this matter fairly soon, and this distinction is key to the rationale you present below for supporting your position.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Adams,

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