

The Alberta Tar Sands Industry's Troubled Export Ambitions to the U.S.

By Roger Annis, November 15, 2011

In the wake of the reported delay by the U.S. government of the Keystone XL pipeline to carry Alberta tar sands product to refineries in Texas, the tar sands industry and Canadian government are making noises about shifting export sales ambitions towards Asia and away from the United States. Much of this is bluff, intended to push back the important successes that the popular movement against the pipeline has won in the United States (but not in Canada). Indeed, the news this morning is that TransCanada Corporation is discussing with the State of Nebraska a rerouting of the pipeline around the Nebraska Sandhills. This might dampen one of the sources of opposition to the pipeline and was something the company said heretofore was not financially feasible.

There is a substantive obstacle to getting tar sands product to Asia via a so-called 'Gateway' pipeline across British Columbia to a West Coast export terminal. It is the groundswell of popular opposition in Canada. It is already considerable, notably among the several dozen Indigenous nations through whose territories such a pipeline would have to pass or through whose coastal waters the oil supertankers would have to navigate.

Here are two informative articles from yesterday's *Globe and Mail* that examine the ambitions of the tar sands industry and the obstacles in the way of its continued expansion:

Canada's oil industry faces an urgent search for new markets
By Nathan Vanderklippe, *Globe and Mail*, Nov 13, 2011

The lengthy delay in a U.S. decision on the controversial Keystone XL pipeline has created sudden soul-searching for Canada's energy and political leaders, who have now turned their attention to opening the way for oil exports to Asia. Read the article [here](#).

Opponents of Northern Gateway pipeline brace for a fight
By Brenda Bouw, *Globe and Mail*, Nov 13, 2011
After the delay of the Canada-U.S. Keystone XL pipeline, opponents of the Northern Gateway project running from Alberta to British Columbia are preparing for a tougher battle, even as Enbridge Inc. maintains it has no plans to change tactics. Read the article [here](#).

And here is an article on the rapid expansion of natural gas fracking in Canada:

A Rock and a Hard Place

The energy industry calls fracking a game changer, but environmentalists compare it to coal and oil. As energy demands collide with climate change, the question becomes whether fracking is worth the risk.
By Chris Wood, *Walrus magazine*, December 2011

For background on the social consequences of the expansion of coal and natural gas industries in British Columbia and plans to export Alberta tar sands, see "British [Columbia Fossil Fuel Superpower Ambitions](#)", by Roger Annis, June 26, 2010.