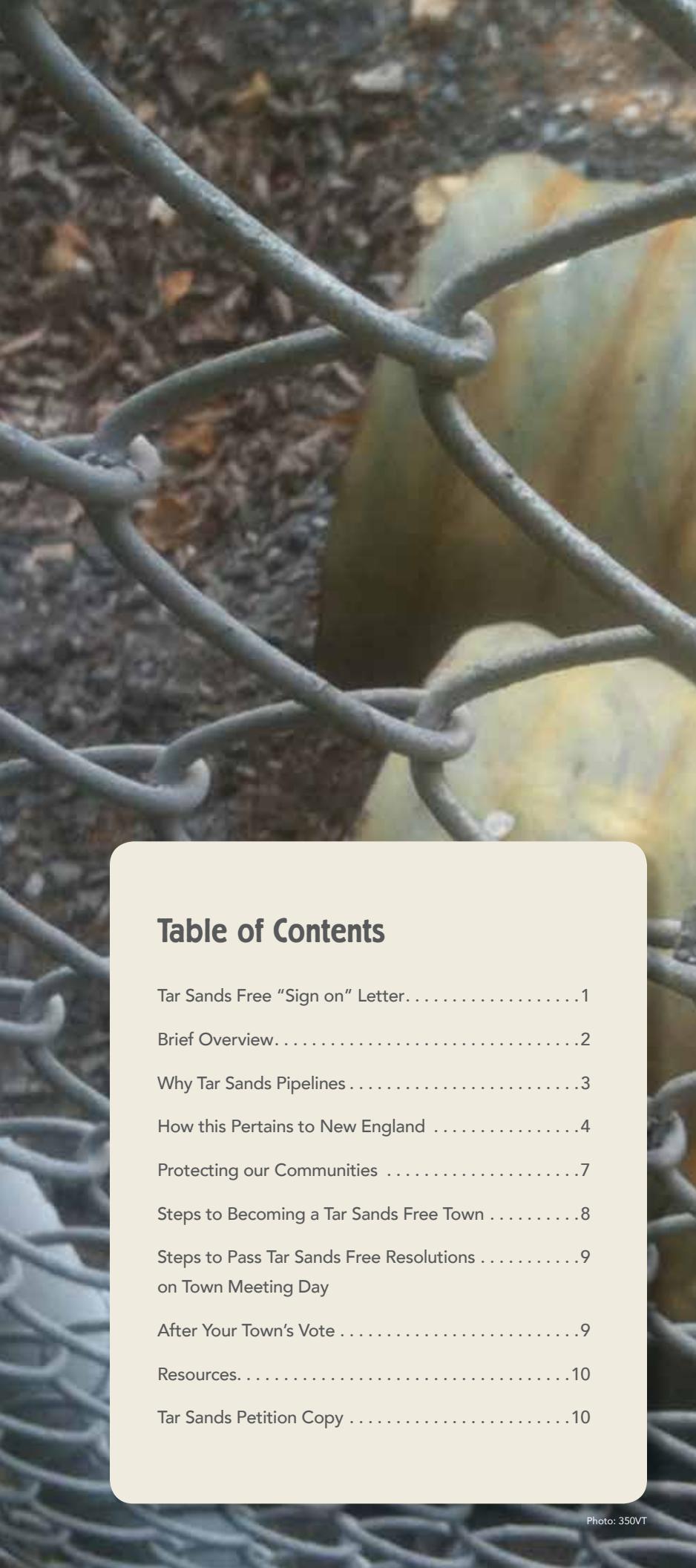


# **KEEP VERMONT TAR SANDS FREE**



**HOW TO  
Keep Our  
Communities  
Safe, Healthy  
and Prosperous**



## Ten Steps Toward Passing a Resolution in Your Town

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1. Contact the Tar Sands Free Vermont office ([andy@350vt.org](mailto:andy@350vt.org)) to get names of others in your area, and for ongoing resources and support.
2. Contact your Town Clerk to find out how many signatures you need (5% of your town's registered voters), and the town's due date for those signatures (usually mid- to late-January).
3. Confirm your petition wording, and print petitions in the proper format (or ask us to print some for you).
4. Begin collecting signatures, and find others to help.
5. Gather friends and allies to help plan your effort, whether at a potluck dinner in your home, or in a public place.
6. Educate yourself and others about tar sands. Consider organizing an educational forum or film showing, perhaps together with folks from nearby towns.
7. Practice public speaking with your friends, or at trainings organized to support the campaign.
8. Communicate with town officials, and related groups and businesses in your town, to assess their concerns and seek their support.
9. Learn about Town Meeting process, plan your presentation with your neighbors, and prepare for any unexpected circumstances or issues that may arise ([www.sec.state.vt.us/town-meeting/index.html](http://www.sec.state.vt.us/town-meeting/index.html)).
10. Report the results of your Town Meeting vote to the Tar Sands Free Vermont office, along with the final language that passed in your town.

# Keep Vermont Tar Sands Free

We, the undersigned, support preventing the transportation of tar sands crude oil through Vermont, and unite to keep Vermont tar sands free.

Though the 62-year-old Portland-Montreal pipeline running through Vermont's Northeast Kingdom is not currently carrying tar sands oil, transportation of this highly corrosive crude oil is threatening public health and natural resources in many other states and Canadian provinces. It may be just a matter of time before Vermont is next.

The oil and gas industry has discovered a huge underground mass of dense, gravel-embedded crude oil (referred to as "tar sands") the size of Florida in Alberta, Canada. This oil deposit is also one of the continent's largest sources of climate-changing greenhouse gases. However, due to the geographic location of this oil, pipelines must be used to pump the oil to seaports for shipment to international markets. The Portland-Montreal pipeline could potentially transport this oil, putting ten Vermont towns, and fifteen vital bodies of water in the Northeast Kingdom at serious risk.

Tar sands oil spills are more prevalent than conventional oil spills. Tar sands oil has been likened to liquid sandpaper, which can grind and burn its way through a pipe. Numerous toxic chemicals are also added to the thick oil to enhance its fluidity and help ease transport. Increased rates of cancer and other serious health concerns have been reported within close proximity to currently operating tar sands pipelines.

With weak federal oversight, protecting Vermont's communities and natural resources falls to state officials. Therefore, it's critical for state legislators to prevent the reversed flow of the Portland-Montreal pipeline for the use of transporting tar sands oil through Vermont.

For these reasons, we strongly support the efforts to prevent the transportation of tar sands oil through Vermont, and we encourage our elected officials to do the same.



## BRIEF OVERVIEW

### ... OF TAR SANDS DEVELOPMENT AND ITS PIPELINES

The Alberta tar sands are situated in Northern Canada beneath an area of Boreal forest and wetlands approximately the size of Florida. This region provides habitat for a myriad of wildlife, and has been the traditional home of many indigenous First Nation communities for thousands of years.

Tar sands oil companies are destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of this wildlife haven to mine and drill tar sands. Alberta tar sands oil does not flow freely from the ground like the gushers portrayed in the movies. Instead, it is extracted either by open-pit mining, which razes thousands of acres of forestland, or in-situ drilling, which fragments huge swaths of the Boreal forest and uses even more energy than mining. Both methods are water- and energy-intensive, though the oil industry is increasingly turning towards in-situ drilling, which produces even more greenhouse gas emissions than mining.

Tar sands mining to date has produced more than 65 square miles of toxic waste lakes in Alberta, which serve as death traps for migratory birds and which leach into the Athabasca River and its watershed. Indigenous communities living downstream are experiencing elevated rates of cancer, renal failure, lupus, and

hyperthyroidism. The tar sands oil that flows through pipelines is not the same as conventional oil. Because tar sands oil, or bitumen, is nearly solid at room temperature, it is mixed with chemical solvents to liquefy it for pipeline transport, (making it into diluted bitumen or Dilbit). These chemicals include neurotoxins such as benzene, n-hexane, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which adversely affect the human central nervous system if exposed to them in the event of a spill.

After being transported via pipeline, the dense and corrosive tar sands product must be upgraded and refined, further elevating levels of air and water pollution, smog, greenhouse gas emissions, as well as severe public health problems such as cancer, asthma, and emphysema.

**"If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate."**

— Dr. James Hansen  
NASA Goddard Institute



**Above Left:** Portland Montreal Pipe Line at Casco Bay. **Above Center:** Enbridge's tar sands pipeline spilled more than 1 million gallons of tar sands oil into Michigan's Kalamazoo River. **Above Right:** The 2010 spill devastated the Kalamazoo watershed and much of its wildlife.



Photo: NTSB

Above: Ruptured segment of the Enbridge tar sands pipeline in Michigan, July, 2010.

## WHY TAR SANDS PIPELINES ... ARE A BAD IDEA

Due to its corrosive quality, tar sands oil has been likened to liquid sandpaper. There are indications that, due to this corrosive quality, tar sands oil spills are more prevalent than conventional oil spills. Here's why:

**It is acidic.** Diluted bitumen (Dilbit) has organic acid concentrations up to 20 times higher than conventional crude oil, and contains up to 10 times more sulfur.

**It is hot.** Tar sands products flowing through pipelines create friction that raises the temperature and amplifies the gravelly oil's corrosive qualities.

**It is abrasive.** Abrasive materials like quartz and pyrite and particles are suspended in Dilbit's variegated makeup.

**It is viscous.** Tar sands are 40 to 70 times thicker than North American conventional crude oil. This high viscosity requires tar sands pipelines to operate at higher pressures than conventional pipelines.

On July 25, 2010, an Enbridge tar sands pipeline near Marshall, Michigan, burst open, spewing more than one million gallons of tar sands diluted bitumen. The spill eventually contaminated a 30-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River as well as a nearby lake. Despite multiple alarms and warning signals, operators did not shut down the pipeline for more than 17 hours after the spill began.

A tar sands spill near rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water causes much more harm than a conventional oil spill because tar sands oil can sink and seriously complicate cleanup efforts. Shortly after the spill, people in Michigan began reporting "strong, noxious odors and associated health symptoms." According to a 2010 report by the Michigan Department of Community Health, officials identified 145 patients who reported illness and symptoms associated with the leak. As of November 2012, the clean-up is continuing, at an estimated, current cost of \$825 million, making it the costliest-ever inland oil spill clean-up.

## HOW DOES THIS PERTAIN TO NEW ENGLAND?

In 2008, Montreal Pipe Line Limited (MPLL) and Enbridge Incorporated collaborated on a project they called "Trailbreaker," which would link existing pipelines from Alberta to the coast of Maine and reverse their flow direction, giving tar sands producers access to new markets via eastern ports. The plan was shelved a year later for economic reasons, but multiple recent actions indicate that it is being revived.

To transport tar sands oil from Alberta through New England, Enbridge is openly pursuing the expansion and reversal of a pre-existing pipeline through Ontario and Quebec, and has already received permits to reverse a section of the pipeline. If these are not blocked, Enbridge will be poised to break a trail for tar sands bitumen to flow into New England, potentially via the Portland-Montreal Pipe Line (PMPL), which now carries conventional crude oil from Portland (Maine) to Montreal. Despite its relative anonymity, PMPL is no "mom and pop" operation. The convoluted corporate family tree shows that ExxonMobil has a majority stake in the Portland-Montreal Pipe Line and is thus a probable partner with Enbridge in this plan.



Photo: 350VT

New England factors directly into a \$2.6 billion Eastern Access initiative announced by Enbridge in May of 2012





Photo: 350VT

**Left:** Mississquoi River near pipeline crossing;  
**Below:** Portion of the Portland Montreal Pipeline, exposed in Roaring Brook, Barton, VT (July, 2012)

### A Direct Threat to Vermont

The Portland-Montreal Pipeline (PMPL) is actually a series of three side-by-side oil pipelines, stretching 236 miles from Montreal to Portland, Maine. They were built between 1941 and 1965. The smallest and oldest stopped transporting oil in 1982. The newest pipeline—24 inches across with a carrying capacity of 410,000 barrels per day—currently transports crude oil from Portland, Maine, to Montreal. The remaining line is 18 inches in diameter and can carry 192,000 barrels of oil daily. It was temporarily deactivated in 2011 and filled with nitrogen to help prevent interior corrosion. It is this aging, 62-year old 18-inch line that is currently tagged for reversal, conceivably transporting tar sands crude oil from Montreal to Portland, Maine.

**The Portland-Montreal Pipeline travels through the Northeast Kingdom towns of Jay, Troy, Newport, Irasburg, Barton, Sutton, Burke, Victory, Lunenburg, and Guildhall.**

In addition, it crosses these bodies of water: the Mississquoi River, Beetle Brook, Ware Brook, Black River, Roaring Brook, Barton River, Annis Brook, Sutton River, Roundy Brook, Passumpsic River (East Branch), Moose River, Granby Brook, Catsbow Brook, Hudson Brook, and the Connecticut River. It comes very close to Crystal Lake and the Victory Basin Wildlife Management Area. The Black River, which the pipeline crosses, flows right into Lake Memphremagog.

### The Spill History of this Pipeline

In 1950, 125,000 gallons of crude oil spilled near a pumping station in St. Césaire, Quebec. In 1960, a section of pipe broke near Waterford, Maine and leaked 42,000 gallons of oil into a small brook. On March 3, 1977, according to the Stanstead Journal, hundreds of gallons of crude oil from one of these pipelines spilled into Ware Brook and eventually the Black River and Lake Memphremagog. In 1999, another 11,900 gallons spilled at St. Césaire.

In 2009, the PMPL was issued a "Notice of Amendment" by the U.S. Department of Transportation, requiring substantial "corrective action" to plans and procedures for emergency response training and corrosion controls. The pipelines are exposed at a number of stream crossings, where they appear to be uncoated bare steel.

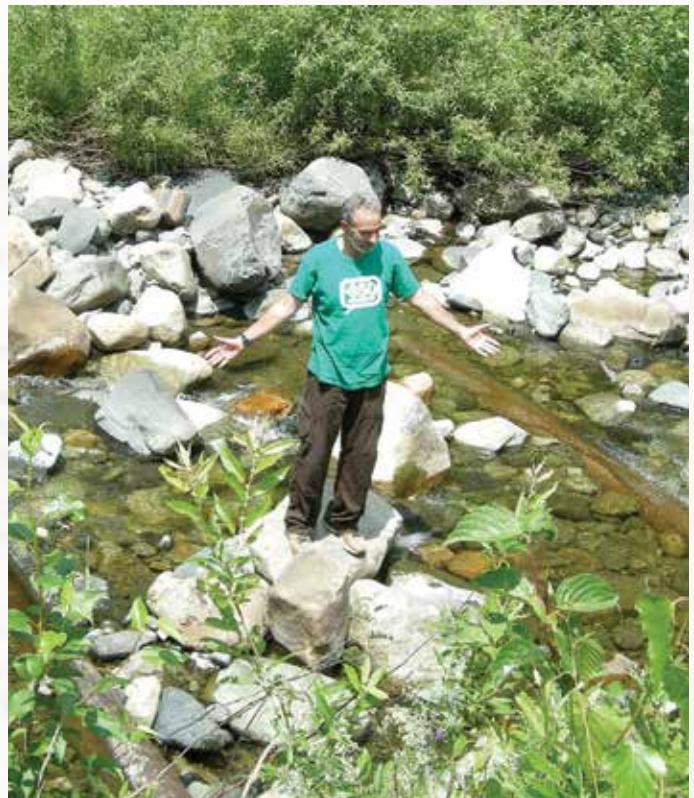


Photo: 350VT

## Current Status

Although Enbridge claims that the planned flow reversal and expansion of their pipelines in Canada are stand-alone projects, its applications suggest a plan to ship tar sands oil through Vermont. A new pumping station has been proposed for Dunham, Quebec, which is only five miles from the Vermont border. The pumping station is a key piece of infrastructure needed for reversing the flow of the PMPL and allowing the transport of heavy tar sands oil from Montreal to Portland.

**Over the last year a growing coalition of local and national groups and organizations working both in the United States and Canada have come together to oppose the expansion of tar sands oil in this region. The groups include: 350.org, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Environmental Defence Canada, Equiterre, Friends of the Earth, Better Future Project, Climate Summer, Environment Maine, Toxics Action Center, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Vermont Natural Resources Council, VPIRG, Institute for Social Ecology, and others. This coalition continues to expand at a steady rate.**



Photo: Stephen Demetrou



Photo: 350VT



Photo: 350VT

**Above Top and Middle:** the existing pipeline crosses through residential areas and main highways in New England.

# PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

## ... WHAT MUST BE DONE

The reality is that multiple oil and pipeline companies are simultaneously developing various plans to ship tar sands through New England. If plan A doesn't work today, they'll come up with plan B or C. The only proven line of defense against this relentless onslaught is united and vocal public opposition. We need to take action and call on our governments to do thorough reviews of all oil pipelines that might carry tar sands, to conduct long-range clean energy plans before committing to any large-scale infrastructure that would increase oil consumption, and embrace policies that would reduce oil demand.

As part of erecting this wall of opposition, we are currently implementing the Tar Sands Free Town Resolution Initiative, which connects people all across the United States and Canada who have a common goal: to pass local resolutions to block the use of tar sands oil and its derivatives in our respective communities. Although tar sands crude oil and fuel derived from tar sands are still only minimally present in New England, projects like the PMPL reversal would increase this dramatically. Refined products derived from tar sands could also reach New England after being processed in Gulf Coast refineries. As pipeline companies take steps to bring tar sands directly to the eastern

seaboard for export, town and city resolutions are important for demonstrating our strong regional opposition.

### What Does It Mean to Be a Tar Sands Free Town?

A Tar Sands Free Town is a community that is working toward a healthy future for the planet and its people. Rather than pursuing a destructive path of increasing dependence on dirty fuels that are destroying the planet, a tar sands free community embraces clean energy.



**The strongest defense against unwanted tar sands expansion has proven to be well organized public opposition at the local level.**



Photo: 350VT



**Above:** Local habitat defenders, naturalists and farmers are taking action to keep New England Tar Sands Free.

## STEPS TO BECOMING A TAR SANDS FREE TOWN ...

**Raise awareness locally. Set up information booths in public places and outside of banks and gas stations; hand out leaflets and collect contact information.** Organize film nights; speaker events; and workshops. Court the local media so that this issue gets covered in your area. We're happy to help with organizing and directing regional and national media attention your way.

**Lobby your local town leaders to adopt a Tar Sands Free Town Resolution or petition to introduce one at your Town Meeting.** Please coordinate closely with us on this, as we may already be working with folks from your town who are doing the same thing. Write letters to the editor or op-ed pieces, organize meetings and petitions, and have a presence at local government meetings. This is particularly useful if your town has a pipeline or pumping station nearby.

**Join your Town Energy Committee to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.** Visit the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network ([www.vecan.net](http://www.vecan.net)) website to find out how to connect with the Energy Committees in Vermont ([www.vnrc.org/article/archive/4910](http://www.vnrc.org/article/archive/4910)).

**Build the movement:** make contacts with other local groups, including Transition Network ([www.transitionvermont.ning.com](http://www.transitionvermont.ning.com)); 350 Vermont ([www.350vt.org](http://www.350vt.org)); Sierra

Club ([www.vermont.sierraclub.org](http://www.vermont.sierraclub.org)) and/or other environmental groups. Take the Tar Sands Free community beyond your town borders. While you're at it, take action at the national and international levels through online activism, with organizations like the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) ([www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)), National Wildlife Federation (NWF) ([www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)), Greenpeace ([www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/](http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/)) and others!

**Research where your town purchases its heating oil and transport fuel.** Ask your town or city officials to find out whether their suppliers purchase fuel from tar sands oil refineries. Lobby your town to utilize a tar sands free supplier where possible, and encourage your elected officials to push for greater transparency so that the public can know what's flowing in their pipelines.

**Encourage local businesses to become a Tar Sands Free company.** This includes both for profit and not for profit companies, as well as farms and other businesses. Most of these buy fuel of some sort and thus can take demonstrable action to become tar sands free.

**Join our Tar Sands Free Vermont Action List to participate in broader state and regional actions and programs. Contact andy@350VT.org**



Photo: 350VT

**Above:** Victory State Forest, one of the wild, beautiful places in Vermont potentially threatened by tar sands oil transportation.

## ► Steps to Pass Tar Sands Free Resolutions on Town Meeting Day

Organizing to pass a resolution in your town can be as engaging or as simple as time and energy allows. Please adapt these steps to your own particular situation.

**Contact Tar Sands Free VT** to see who else in your area has been active on tar sands issues. 802-999-5275 or andy@350vt.org.

### **Start building a network of people to work with you.**

You may want to consult with people who have organized around other issues in your community and get advice from them.

**Consult your Town Clerk to find out how many signatures you need** to get an issue onto your town warning (agenda). (This will be 5 percent of the registered voters in your town.) Also confirm the deadline by which signatures need to be submitted; this is usually around the third week in January (approximately 6 weeks before Town Meeting Day).

**Choose your resolution wording.** This document offers one template (p.12) and more are available from the Tar Sands Free office. We can provide petition forms that are laid out in the proper format. It is often helpful to discuss your petition with Selectboard members in advance of submitting a petition.

**Start gathering signatures.** It's important to get some help with this. Seek out others in your community who can help with signature gathering, and also help to present the resolution on Town Meeting Day. Map out the best locations for petitioning in your town, such as local co-ops and other food stores, the Post Office (where feasible), coffee shops, and other well-frequented public places. Petitions posted on bulletin boards are helpful to start, but it usually requires a more person-to-person approach to obtain 5 percent.

**Educate yourself and others about the tar sands and their consequences.** Assemble a packet of information that you can hand out to people when you're gathering signatures. If you need materials, feel free to contact the Tar Sands Free VT office for more.

**Hold community meetings to plan and further communicate your efforts.** Try to attract a diversity of participants, perhaps by holding a potluck dinner. It may also be appropriate to arrange visits to local businesses to discuss the issues from their perspective.

**Ensure that you and people you know are registered to vote in your city or town.** Have voter registration materials readily available.

### **Practice speaking about Tar Sands issues.**

We will hold Mock Town Meetings in several locations during the winter to help people prepare for Town Meeting Day. Please check our website ([www.350vt.org](http://www.350vt.org)) for details..

## ► After Your Town's Vote . . .

### **Please let us know what happened in your town.**

Call the Tar Sands Free campaign office at 802-999-5275 or email andy@350vt.org. Did your article pass? Exactly what wording passed? Did your town seem generally supportive of the article? If it was voted down, do you know/understand why? Do you have thoughts on changing the wording, or the process for next year? What would have helped you in your efforts? What advice would you give others working in your region? Which groups helped you to bring the resolution to a vote?

### **Utilize the Media! Contact reporters, newspapers, and radio stations and let them know what happened in your town.**

Ask them to write an article, or offer to write one yourself. Send a letter to the editor and encourage other people to do the same. There are lots of online magazines and news sites that may run a story about your success. Don't hesitate to get your story out there—it's important that people throughout our region find out about it!

**Write to your legislators—state and federal.** Tell them about the resolution that your town passed and urge them to take action. Although the state and federal governments have largely ignored the issue of tar sands, municipalities that are passing resolutions are helping to wake them up!

**Monitor follow-up and implementation of your resolution.** Keep a close watch on actions undertaken by officials following your vote. Make sure that all of the steps that were agreed to by voters are actually carried out. If your resolution mandated notifying elected representatives of your town's position, offer to help town officials draft this letter and help to assemble supporting materials. If there was opposition in your community to the resolution, find out more about it. Continuing to talk with local groups is an important part of ongoing work!

# Petition to Keep Vermont Tar Sands FREE

We, the undersigned voters in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_,  
request that the Selectboard warn the following resolution for our 2013 Town Meeting:

Shall the voters of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_ instruct the Selectboard to enact the following resolution to protect citizen health and safety, water bodies and other natural resources, in relation to tar sands oil transport through Vermont?

WHEREAS, the oil industry appears to be planning to use an aging oil pipeline, built in 1950, to bring Canadian tar sands diluted bitumen through Vermont on its way to Portland, Maine for export; and

WHEREAS, the mining, drilling, and processing of tar sands requires a vast and destructive industrial operation that emits 3-5 times more carbon pollution per barrel than conventional U.S. crude oil, among many other problems; and

WHEREAS, pipelines carrying tar sands have a greater likelihood of leaks and spills because of the corrosive properties of tar sands, and such spills are more costly and difficult to clean up than conventional oil spills, as demonstrated by a 2010 tar sands spill that contaminated the Kalamazoo River in Michigan.

## NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Town expresses its opposition to the transport of tar sands oil through Vermont, and its deep concern about the risks of such transport for public health and safety, property values, and our natural resources; and
2. That the Town shall require every fuel vendor, as a precondition for doing business with Town, to provide complete and current lists of the refinery sources of origin for all fuel the vendor sells, and thereby direct the Town's purchases as much as possible toward vendors whose refinery sources do not use any material derived from tar sands; and
3. That the Town encourage the State of Vermont and other northeast states to support policies phasing out fuel purchases as quickly as possible from vendors whose refinery sources of origin use any form of tar sands, and support policies such as a Clean Fuels Standard to help keep such fuels out of the region's fuel supply; and
4. That the Town call upon the Vermont State Legislature and the U.S. Congress to ensure thorough environmental impact reviews of any tar sands-related pipeline proposals, including the health and safety impacts of potential tar sands oil spills, along with clear guidelines for tracking the origins and chemical composition of pipeline contents and feedstocks; and
5. That the Town transmit a copy of this resolution to all relevant state, federal and Canadian officials, and the CEOs of Portland Pipe Line Corporation, Montreal Pipe Line Limited, Imperial Oil, ExxonMobil, and Enbridge Inc.

Name (printed)

Signature

Address where registered to vote

Phone/email if you want to help

## Resources

### Additional Resources at 350Vermont:

[www.350vt.org](http://www.350vt.org)



**LET'S KEEP  
TAR SANDS OIL  
OUT OF VERMONT!**

Contact: Tar Sands Free VT office 802-999-5275, andy@350vt.org