

Ottawa Tar Sands Pipeline - Factsheet



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Quick Summary

TransCanada has recently proposed to convert a gas pipeline to carry up to 1.1 million barrels a day (130 million litres) of Albertan tar sands oil that would pass through the south end of Ottawa and the Rideau River. We are urging the public and city officials to reject this proposed pipeline, which would bring nothing but risks to the region.

Why does this matter?

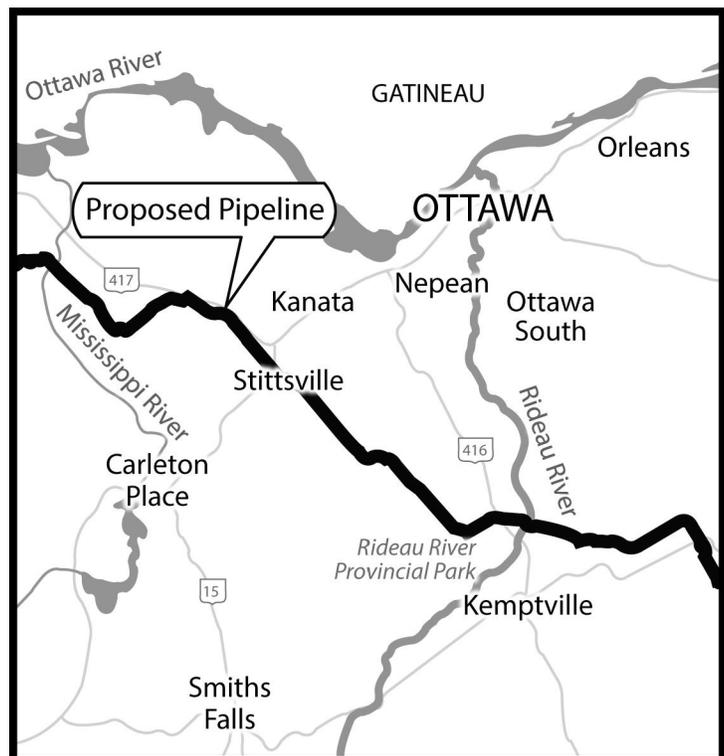
Quite simply, we feel that the pipeline is all risk and no reward for the resident of Ottawa.

TransCanada wants to convert a 55-year old gas pipeline into one that would transport toxic Tar Sands oil past Ottawa, and ship it out of the east coast.

Also, pipelines spill. After the recent disaster in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, involving the shipping of oil (in that case, by train), the risks of shipping oil near people's houses and sensitive ecosystems has become a central issue for many.

While many argue pipelines are safer than trains, that doesn't mean they are *safe*. In the US alone, there were an average of 250 pipeline spills *per year* over the last 20 years. Canada counts over 100 spills on average per year.

Many pipelines are now shipping more corrosive oil from Alberta's Tar Sands, thought to be responsible for even more pipeline ruptures. And when they spill, because of the extra chemicals required to dilute and ship the heavy Tar Sands crude, the spills are harder to clean up, and also cause more damage, as this kind of oil is known to sink and not float.



In 2010, a rupture in another (40 year old) pipeline carrying Tar Sands oil in Michigan flooded the Kalamazoo River with about 3.8 million litres of the toxic material. That spill cost nearly \$800 million to partially clean up, but the river still lies polluted years later.

This pipeline would threaten the sensitive ecosystem of the Rideau River, which flows into the Ottawa River, with a major oil spill. It could also devastate many of the rich farmlands and other ecosystems that surround the city.

TransCanada also came under fire last year when one of its engineers came forward to blow the whistle on the company not complying with Canada's (and its own) safety standards, allegations which were later confirmed by government investigation. TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline has also been widely protested across the United States for the potential environmental impacts.

Lastly, we feel that this project commits us to expansion of the Tar Sands in Alberta, which has already created a toxic legacy and many health issues for local residents and First Nations, in addition to being a prime contributor to climate change. We feel the residents of Ottawa are smart enough and deserve the chance to have their say in our city's and our country's future.

I want to do something! What can I do?

Well, we're glad you asked! We are currently asking for people to take copies of **door-knockers** we've prepared and get them up on houses across the city, but particularly in Ottawa South, along the proposed pipeline route, and along the Rideau River. We also have a **petition** that we want to see people across the city sign, to show our united voice on the issue - these also need to get to homes across the city, at festivals, and any other events you might attend. We need people to be raising the issues and spreading the information on **social media**. We need people to **contact their politicians** - locally, provincially, and federally, to let them know we reject this pipeline from coming through Ottawa. We will be hosting **further events** and hope you could make it out to those.

If any of these things interest and excite you, and you'd like to get involved, please get a hold of Ben Powless, Ecology Ottawa's Tar Sands Pipeline Community Organizer, at ben.powless@ecologyottawa.ca

Who are you?

We are a diverse group of residents of the Ottawa area working to keep the City of Ottawa and the Rideau River free of dirty and dangerous tar sands oil.

The effort is being led by Ecology Ottawa right now, and hopefully a number of other groups soon, under the banner of Tar Free 613. Ecology Ottawa is the capital's largest grassroots environmental organization, and has been working for years to make Ottawa the nation's greenest city.

To sign the petition, go to: bit.ly/tarfree613

For more information, and to access our resources, please visit TarFree613.ca and EcologyOttawa.ca