

NINE REASONS why we should be suspicious of what TransCanada tells us:

1- TRANSCANADA PIPELINES LEAK

TransCanada's gas and oil pipelines leak. It's not a question of *if* the pipelines will leak, but rather *when, where and how much* the pipelines will leak. Since 2010, when TransCanada's first oil pipeline came into service, the company has reported 152 oil spills. According to the National Energy Board (NEB), 17 of the 39 major pipeline (gas and oil combined) accidents that have happened in Canada (between 1992 and 2014) occurred on pipelines owned by TransCanada and its subsidiary NOVA Gas Transmission Ltd. (NGTL). This is most likely a conservative number, as the NEB only discloses 'reportable' breaches and many pipeline incidents never even come to public attention.

2- POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

The company cultivates connections to political decision makers in both Canada and the United States. Some examples include: Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, hired by TransCanada in December 2013 to help win support for the Energy East pipeline from aboriginal communities along the pipeline route; Paul Elliott, TransCanada's U.S. based lobbyist, is the former deputy director of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2008/09; and TransCanada board member Derek Burney, is a former Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. (1989-1993).

3- GOVERNMENT LOBBYING

TransCanada constantly lobbies Canadian and US governments to weaken environmental policies. The company has registered 411 federal lobby communications in Canada from July 2008 to December 2014 making it one of the most active lobbyists of the federal government. Since 2001, TransCanada, together with its subsidiary TransCanada Pipelines, has spent \$7.35 million (USD) lobbying the U.S. federal government. Approximately 80% of this total has been spent since 2009.

4- SPYING and COLLUSION

TransCanada has been working with law enforcement agencies to spy on its opponents. In the US, joint trainings were held with TransCanada, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other law enforcement agencies. TransCanada also hosted presentations for law enforcement officials where the company suggested who police should target and profile, what charges police could use and how aggressive they should be. In Canada, a strong collaboration has been established between the federal government, the oil industry, Canadian Security and

Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) over the last 10 years.

5- TAINTED HISTORY IN LATIN AMERICA

TransCanada boasts of having built and operated natural gas pipelines in Latin America, including the GasAndes Pipeline in Argentina and Chile. The company declares that these pipelines remain part of its “proud history of industry-leading pipeline construction and operation.” What the company fails to mention is that the GasAndes pipeline was built despite serious concerns from communities along the route about potential for explosions given that the pipeline was to pass through one of the world’s most earthquake-prone regions.

6- BAD FAITH ENGAGEMENT WITH FIRST NATIONS

The following two cases are emblematic of TransCanada’s bad faith engagement with First Nations. The first example is related to how TransCanada consistently ignored requests for information and the concerns of the Lubicon Cree in the lead-up and during the construction of its North Central Corridor Pipeline in Alberta. The company claimed that “no objections were raised in extensive consultation with native communities.” The Lubicon nation maintained that their concerns were not taken seriously and that their rights had been violated, while the government and TransCanada said that they had been adequately consulted. James Anaya, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, investigated this case and his report makes clear that from the perspective of the Lubicon Cree, their fundamental rights were violated.

The second example is related to TransCanada’s Grand Rapids Pipeline and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN). In July 2014, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) formally pulled out of the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) hearings for the pipeline. Citing industry prejudice and impossible timelines, Chief Adam explained that the AER had refused to give them enough time to study new documents submitted by TransCanada. Previously, the company had submitted incomplete environmental, safety, spill contingency and caribou protection plans. The Chief of the ACFN, Allan Adam, accused TransCanada of dealing with his community in bad faith, saying that instead of taking aboriginal concerns seriously, it was more focused on what it would cost to “buy us off.”

7- BUYING OFF COMMUNITIES

In order to discourage resistance and opposition, TransCanada has attempted to entice compliance or support by providing financial or other types of incentives to communities and municipalities. One example is that of Fort Nelson First Nation who was given funding for a school computer lab and offered a youth training program in the lead-up to the signing of a 10-year communications and engagement funding protocol with TransCanada. However, some of

these incentives are accompanied by non-disclosure clauses. Such an example came from an accidental leak that found that a \$30,000 grant from TransCanada to go towards a Fire truck for the town of Mattawa in Ontario was accompanied by a 5-year gag order clause that said that “the Town of Mattawa will not publicly comment on TransCanada’s operations or business projects.”

8- GREENWASHING

Strategic partnerships with high profile conservation groups have allowed TransCanada to greenwash its image, providing a “green” veneer to an otherwise fundamentally dirty corporation. For example, in 2009, TransCanada committed up to \$11.4 million to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), making the NCC the recipient of the company’s largest-ever community investment. The company has also partnered with Ducks Unlimited (DU) for over 15 years, and in 2013 contributed \$1 million to DU projects in Louisiana and Saskatchewan.

9- AGGRESSIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES

In 2014, leaked PR strategy documents revealed that TransCanada had hired the world’s largest PR firm, Edelman, to prepare its Energy East Campaign, including the use of controversial strategies to damage the reputation of opponents and adding "layers of difficulty for opponents, distracting them from their mission and causing them to redirect their resources." One example of these strategies includes a \$5 million (USD) Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) against 19 activists and several environmental groups. The defendants, threatened with losing their homes and life’s savings, agreed in 2013 to cease opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline.

Sources:

All of the information and data included in this fact sheet was taken directly from the Polaris Institute’s 2015 Corporate Profile of the TransCanada Corporation called ‘[Unplugging the Dirty Energy Economy](#)’. For more information, see the profile.