

Canadian Mayors Letter to Obama

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Section:

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

On behalf of Canadians living in cities large and small, we write to you today as Canadian municipal leaders. We look forward to working with you and our American municipal counterparts to promote a strong and sustainable low-carbon economy.

We are writing to ask for your leadership in confronting global warming and adopting a low-carbon fuel standard. By providing a stimulus for alternate technologies, this approach will help to create new economic opportunities while at the same time protecting the environment.

Municipalities have been at the forefront of Canadian efforts to combat global warming and build strong and sustainable industries. Municipal initiatives to cut emissions are actively contributing to Canada's Kyoto Protocol target to cut emissions to six percent below 1990 levels by 2010.

Unfortunately, Canada is failing to meet its Kyoto commitments, in large part due to the development of the tar sands, which are one of the world's dirtiest sources of oil. Extracting and upgrading synthetic crude oil from tar sands is incredibly energy intensive, generating 3 to 5 times as much greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution as the production of conventional oil. Moreover, production plans for the next few years call for a significant increase in tar sands oil production, thereby further increasing emissions. Beyond its contribution to climate change, the tar sands cause unacceptable impacts to fresh water, boreal forest, wildlife and air quality. The use of oil derived from tar sands is of great concern as Canadian cities seek to ensure that energy security and climate protection go hand-in-hand.

We understand that your first foreign visit will be to Canada, possibly to one of our cities, and that climate change and energy issues will likely be on the agenda. As you prepare for your first foreign visit, we ask you to recognize how tar sands oil is impeding the efforts of American and Canadian cities to forge a new sustainable energy economy.

We support the “High Carbon Fuels” resolution adopted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in June 2008, which called on mayors “to track and reduce the lifecycle carbon dioxide emissions from their municipal vehicles by preventing or discontinuing the purchase of higher-carbon unconventional or synthetic fuels”.

In your discussions with the Canadian government, we encourage you to raise the environmental problems associated with tar sands oil and stress America’s goal of promoting low-carbon fuels and environmentally sustainable energy solutions.

We look forward to welcoming you to Canada. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,