

Windsor On Watch (WOW)

A 350.org community initiative



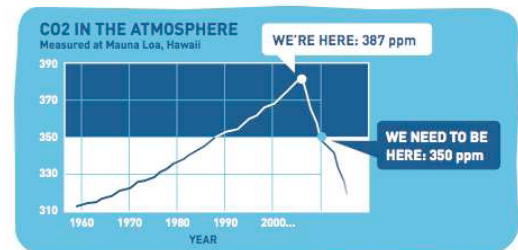
Why are Windsor residents on watch?

As Canadians and global citizens we are concerned about the impact the escalating Albertan tar sands production will have on climate change. Within kilometers of our own community, the Detroit Marathon Refinery is expanding in order to process the increasing supply of bitumen from the tar sands. According to Greenpeace Canada:¹

- *Canada's greenhouse gas emissions climbed 26 per cent between 1990 and 2006, with a 2007 Environment Canada report putting part of the blame on "large increases in oil and gas production." Oil from the tar sands produces five times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventional oil.*
- *We need to reduce our emissions by about 280 million tonnes per year in order to meet Kyoto requirements. The tar sands are emitting around 40 million tonnes of greenhouse gases per year at present, and will probably double to about 80 million tonnes per year by 2011. This will make it impossible to live up to our Kyoto commitments.*

United Nations representatives are meeting in December in Copenhagen to try to hammer out an agreement that would limit carbon emissions. We are joining others across the globe as part of the 350 movement to urge them to make the right decisions. What is the significance "350"? Here is what 350.org has to say:

- *For all of human history until about 200 years ago, our atmosphere contained **275 parts per million of carbon dioxide** (the ratio of the number of carbon dioxide molecules to all of the molecules in the atmosphere). 275 ppm CO₂ is a useful amount. Without some CO₂ and other greenhouse gases that trap heat in our atmosphere, our planet would be too cold for humans to inhabit.*
- *However, many top scientists are in agreement that carbon dioxide in our atmosphere should not exceed 350 parts per million. It's the number we need to achieve in order to avoid runaway climate change.*
- *Global warming is happening faster than ever and humans are responsible. We're already well past the 350 limit -- at approximately 387 ppm and rising 2 ppm a year.*
- *The 350 target -- much lower than most governments and environmental groups previously planned -- emerged in the winter of 2008 as scientists noted effects of global warming, such as the rapid melt of Arctic sea ice, happening decades ahead of projections.*
- *A ground-breaking study led by NASA scientists concluded that if there was more than 350 parts per million CO₂ in the atmosphere, we couldn't have a planet "similar to the one on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adapted."*²



WOW! Achieving the 350 goal will not be easy. But we must succeed-- for the sake of our children and the generations to follow.

¹"Questions and answers about the Alberta Tar Sands." Greenpeace Canada. 27 July 2007. <<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/recent/tarsandsfaq>>.

²"Target atmospheric CO₂: Where should humanity aim?" Atmospheric and Oceanic Physics, James Hansen. 15 October 2008, 14 Sept. 2009 <<http://arxiv.org/abs/0804.1126>>.