



## Talking Points for the National Day of Action in Support of a Canadian Energy Strategy – February 2, 2008

The National Day of Action in Support of a Canadian Energy Strategy is a great time to meet with your Member of Parliament and talk about Canada's energy issues. Below are a few points you might want to raise during your discussion. Don't forget to bring other materials with you, like fact sheets, to help your MP understand your concerns.

1. Canada has been without a national energy strategy for more than 20 years. Since the early 1980s, our political leaders have not even considered policies such as export limits, strategic reserves and restriction of foreign ownership.
2. Even though our country is rich with energy resources, Canadians do not have control over them. Governments have signed this control away through multilateral agreements such as NAFTA and the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP).
3. NAFTA prevents us from selling our energy resources at rates lower than we sell them in the U.S. Under NAFTA, we can't ever cut back on the proportion of energy we produce and sell to the United States, even in times when our country runs short.
4. A recently-launched NAFTA lawsuit by Exxon-Mobil and Murphy Oil, shows how big oil companies will use trade agreements to protect their interests. The companies are suing the government of Newfoundland and Labrador for requiring them to spend some of their soaring profits on local research and job development. As with all NAFTA disputes, the outcome will be determined by a secret panel of trade experts behind closed doors.
5. The United States, a net importer, has a national energy policy. Mexico also has a national energy policy. The two countries Canada is most closely tied to through NAFTA and the SPP have protected their energy interests. Canada should have a national energy strategy that protects the current and future energy needs of its citizens.
6. Our country also has no way to get oil and gas from west to east because we have no cross-country pipelines. Experts have warned that in the event of a natural disaster like a hurricane on the east coast, Atlantic Canada would be in an energy crisis because Canada has no west-to-east pipelines. Instead, multi-billion dollar pipeline projects are being built or proposed in Canada to send energy resources to the U.S.
7. A group of tax specialists from the Montreal-based firm Agora recently looked at the level of taxation of oil and gas companies in Canada to determine whether these companies pay a "fair share" of taxes in the country relative to their profits. The conclusion was the oil and gas industry in Canada has lower taxation levels than all other major industries in Canada. The report exposes how the industry is raking in record profits, while still receiving tax breaks and subsidies from the federal government.
8. Canada's oil and gas industry – in the tar sands in particular – will prevent Canada from meeting its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. In December 2007, the Harper government was singled out for obstructing negotiations at a large international conference in Bali aimed at reducing harmful carbon emissions. According to recent polls, Canadians identify the environment as one of the most pressing issues for the country.
9. The tar sands, which are located in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, have been identified as Canada's largest emitter of carbon dioxide and one of the main reasons our country cannot meet its commitments

under the Kyoto Protocol. Massive amounts of water are used in the oil sands production, which becomes so badly polluted that it cannot be released back into the environment. The tar sands have destroyed boreal forests and released pollutants into nearby lands and water. Concerns have been raised that these pollutants have caused an unusually high cancer rate among the Fort Chipewyan First Nations, who live downstream. Even with the significant environmental and health concerns that have been raised, tar sands development continues at a blistering pace.

10. Without a Canadian Energy Strategy – a strategy that will give Canadians security of their energy supplies, guaranteed access to energy reserves in times of need, and strong policies that protect our environment and focus on finding alternative, less harmful energy solutions – our country will continue to be a victim of an energy gold rush. Politicians cannot let corporations and the market set the agenda, focusing on big business needs, and privatizing public services, while ignoring the energy security needs of Canadians.