



Dear chapter activists,

Faced with climate change and diminishing resources globally, we are at a critical juncture for energy policy. Our government is gambling with our future, allowing flawed free trade agreements, free market rules and big oil to set the agenda with serious social and environmental consequences. The stakes are high. Now, more than ever, we need a Canadian Energy Strategy that ensures energy security and helps transition to sustainable energy production and consumption.

That is why the Council of Canadians has organized the second annual, *Take Charge! A National Day of Action to Demand a Canadian Energy Strategy on Wednesday, February 4, 2009* – it is time to have our voices heard!

Last year was a success! Thirty-five chapters organized 40 actions across the country, and the call for a Canadian Energy Strategy was covered widely in the media. Activities ranged from public forums to tabling in public places, marches and rallies. Prime Minister Harper was flooded with mittens, sent as part of last year's national action to underscore the need for a national strategy. Although many Canadians heard and have joined our call, big oil still has the ear of our government. Rather than developing an energy strategy in the public interest, Harper continues to support a free market approach to energy policy.

The tide is turning. We are at a unique political moment with two significant opportunities for positive change in line with the principles of energy security and ecological sustainability. The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States has opened the possibility of renegotiating the NAFTA, which contains energy provisions that undermine Canadian energy security, gives energy corporations more control, and ensures oil and gas flow south with little direction from governments.

The growing international awareness of the impacts of the tar sands and momentum coming out of the Council of Canadian's annual meeting in Edmonton also presents an opportunity to be heard. As does the current context of the economic slowdown, which provides a brief pause in the alarming pace of development in the tar sands. At this time we must engage in a frank and open discussion across the country and gain momentum supporting the call for no new approvals of tar sands operations or expansions. This is only a first step in reducing further environmental and social destruction caused by the tar sands – ultimately increased tar sands production must be prevented and the damage caused must be reversed. We need to turn away from fossil fuel dependency and create green jobs in renewable energy production, greater conservation and energy efficiency.

Given the political moment before us, the feature topics of this year's day of action will be on the **NAFTA and energy**, and the **tar sands**. The theme for this year's day of action is "Games." Why? Because adopting a market-based approach to our energy is tantamount to playing games, or gambling, with our future – games where big oil profits while Canadian energy security and ecological sustainability is undermined. This day of action toolkit centres on these topics and incorporates the theme in providing creative and effective activity suggestions, media tips and materials.

The toolkit includes:

- Introductory letter
- Ideas for action
- Talking points on energy issues
- Tips on how to get your message to the media about energy including a sample press release
- Declaration in Support of a Canadian Energy Strategy
- Petition calling on the Prime Minister to renegotiate NAFTA
- Fact sheets focused on the tar sands, NAFTA and energy, and a Canadian Energy Strategy
- Tar sands discussion questions
- High resolution photos of the tar sands on a CD

We are very excited about launching a national action in the lead-up to February 4, 2009. We are calling on chapter activists to collect signatures from municipal, provincial and federal representatives and politicians for a **Declaration in support a Canadian Energy Strategy** based on the principles of energy security and ecological sustainability. The goal is to get as many signatures as possible across the country to release publicly on February 4 (the campaign for more declarations will continue after the day of action). The declarations can be used by chapter activists and Council staff to encourage elected officials to support or reject concrete measures on a community, provincial and national level that are in line with the principles of energy security and ecological sustainability.

Join us on Wednesday February 4 and tell the Harper government that Canada needs a Canadian Energy Strategy now! Send in your request for Energy Day of Action materials today!



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