

A message from Alberta's more than 60,000 unionized construction workers

ALBERTA'S OIL SANDS FUTURE: BALANCING THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Albertans and Canadians are in the midst of an important discussion with the potential to affect our energy supply, our economy and the quality of our environment – the development of the oil sands.

If we are to make balanced decisions about the future of oil sands development in Alberta, we must engage in a balanced debate about that development. So, as the public discussion of the environmental impacts of oil sands development takes place, it's vital that participants in that discussion acknowledge *all* of the facts.

We think everyone should understand, for example, that:

- Air quality around Northern Alberta's oil sands operations is better than that of all North American cities reviewed by the multi-stakeholder Alberta Clean Air Strategic Alliance. Overall industry greenhouse gas emissions are down by 27% per barrel since 1990.
- 80% of total oil sands reserves will be developed using 'in situ' (underground) extraction, which uses mostly brackish, non-drinkable water from deep underground that is returned to its source. In-situ recovery does not involve surface mines, nor does it require tailings ponds.
- The ultimate 'draw' of water from the Athabasca River by existing and approved oil sands plants will be just 2.2% of the river's annual flow, and no more than 15% of its lowest seasonal flow.

Clearly, our members have a direct interest in the growth of the oil sands industry. The pay we earn from oil sands projects feeds, houses and educates our families, and it's a huge factor in the health of Alberta's economy. At the same time, however, we and our families want our children to inherit a healthy environment. We believe that improved processes and technology will continue to reduce the environmental impacts of oil sands development.

The Building Trades of Alberta will support the efforts of both government and industry as the discussion of oil sands development continues, to help ensure the discussion is balanced and based on *all* of the facts.

www.buildingtradesalberta.ca



The Skilled Trades Advantage.