



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Will Saskatchewan Oil Sands be a Carbon Copy of Alberta's Mistakes?

Comprehensive new report outlines risks of poorly managed oil sands development and proposes a new approach

Saskatoon, August 13, 2009 — Oil sands development in Saskatchewan should be paused immediately so that appropriate planning and regulatory processes can be put in place before further development occurs, says a report released today by the Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) in conjunction with the Pembina Institute and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. The report, *Carbon Copy: Preventing Oil Sands Fever in Saskatchewan*, outlines key steps that would be required to ensure any oil sands development proceeds responsibly.

"Development of oil sands is still in its early stages in Saskatchewan," says Ann Coxworth of SES, "and therefore we have the opportunity to do things properly and avoid the mistakes we've seen in Alberta. Doing things right means that first the Government of Saskatchewan needs to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the public about the costs and benefits of oil sands development in Saskatchewan".

The oil sands in Saskatchewan could hold as much as 2.3 billion barrels of bitumen, and cover an area of 27,000 square kilometres. The deep oil sands deposits in Saskatchewan would likely be extracted through in situ processes, which are even more greenhouse gas intensive than the oil sands mining done in Alberta.

To avoid Alberta's mistakes, the report says that prior to development Saskatchewan should:

- undertake regional land use planning and establish conservation areas in northwest Saskatchewan

2.

- map aquifers near potential oil sands development and put rules in place to prevent groundwater contamination
- implement a more effective regulatory system and a stronger greenhouse gas management plan
- ensure development of a royalty regime that maximizes benefits to the Saskatchewan public
- along with the federal government, genuinely fulfill its duty to consult affected First Nation and Métis people

"At a time when the international scientific consensus recognizes the need to make reductions in greenhouse gas pollution, oil sands development in Saskatchewan would mean we would be heading in the opposite direction. Saskatchewan already has the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions of any province in Canada. We are confident that the people of Saskatchewan want to see good public policy that reduces these emissions," says Peter Prebble of SES.

The report outlines not only what the impacts could be if Saskatchewan develops its oil sands reserves, but also the effects that the Alberta oil sands are having on Saskatchewan lakes and forests.

"Saskatchewan is already feeling the effects of Alberta's oil sands boom, as lakes and forests are exposed to acid rain that is brought in by prevailing winds. This could be magnified if Saskatchewan oil sands development proceeds in the absence of appropriate rules to protect the environment," says Terra Simieritsch of the Pembina Institute, one of the authors of the report. "If the people of Saskatchewan choose to proceed with oil sands development, they can, through careful planning and proper environmental management, avoid the mistakes that Alberta has made."

-30-

Download the full report and a summary fact sheet at:

www.oilsandswatch.org; www.environmentalsociety.ca or www.cpaws.org ,

For more information contact:

Peter Prebble, Director, Energy and Water Policy, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, (306) 665-0085

Ann Coxworth, Research Advisor, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, (306) 665-1915

Terra Simieritsch, Policy Analyst, The Pembina Institute, (403) 269-3344 ext 102