



News Release

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ExxonMobil is actually majority owner of Maine pipeline and behind plan to transport dangerous tar sands

Pipeline companies lobby tar sands plan behind closed doors while denying their intention

Portland, Maine—A [new analysis](#) released today by NRDC, NWF and other environmental groups shows that ExxonMobil is the majority owner of the pipeline that cuts across Maine and New England—a pipeline that is the subject of an emerging proposal to transport tar sands. ExxonMobil's Canadian subsidiary, Imperial Oil Limited, owns 76 percent of the pipeline, while Canadian oil giant Suncor Energy owns the remaining 24 percent. These companies are among the biggest developers of Canadian tar sands.

In addition, the groups today released information obtained through a Freedom of Access Act request, submitted by NWF, showing that Governor Paul LePage met with the Portland Pipe Line Corporation in October 2011 to talk about tar sands oil, though the company continued to publicly deny that the project was moving forward throughout 2012.

“With a corporate identity like the ‘Portland Pipe Line Corporation,’” it’s easy to lose sight of who is really driving this tar sands pipeline proposal,” said Dylan Voorhees, Clean Energy Director for the Natural Resources Council of Maine. “But the company’s corporate family tree reveals that the vast majority of the pipeline is ultimately owned by the world’s largest company – ExxonMobil, and, unfortunately, Exxon does not have Maine’s interests in mind. They will act to maximize their tar sands profits with little regard to the risk poised to Maine’s people, environment or natural resource economy.”

The research released today finds that the pipeline between Portland, Maine and Montreal has two direct corporate owners: **Montreal Pipe Line Limited (MPLL)**, which owns the stretch in Canada, from the U.S.

border to Montreal and the **Portland Pipe Line Corporation**, which owns the U.S. section and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of MPLL. In turn a direct subsidiary of **ExxonMobil**, **Imperial Oil Limited**, holds a majority interest (76 percent) in the pipeline. A smaller portion (24 percent) is owned by the Canadian giant **Suncor Energy**.

In addition, half of the ten-members of the Portland Pipe Line Corporation's Board of Directors, work for oil companies in Alberta, home of the tar sands, while others are from Ontario or Texas. Only one board member is from Maine and he serves as president of the Portland Pipeline Corp.

"This information is a double whammy—not only is ExxonMobil, the largest oil company in the world, behind the plan to transport dangerous tar sands oil through Maine, but its local representatives have misled the public about the status of the project," said Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor.

For months ExxonMobil's local subsidiary, the Portland Pipeline Corporation, has sought to deflect rising concerns in Maine about tar sands transport by denying that there is an "active" proposal to reverse the use the existing pipeline to transport tar sands. However, documents released today reveal that the company met with Governor LePage and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection last year *specifically* to discuss Canadian tar sands. That meeting happened in October 2011, several months after Enbridge submitted an application in Canada to reverse the Canadian portion of the project in order to carry dangerous tar sands oil eastward.

On the Canadian side of the border, advocates of the first phase of the project have repeatedly claimed that they want to bring tar sands east for *Canadian* use and denied that they are resurrecting the full tar sands reversal plan formerly known as "Trailbreaker." But this just doesn't fit the facts—including the fact that the Canadian consulate itself joined the Maine leadership meetings to talk about tar sands.

ExxonMobil, the company responsible for the disastrous *Valdez* oil spill that rocked the world in 1989, was also responsible for the July 2011 Silvertip Pipeline spill that dumped 42,000 gallons of oil into the pristine Yellowstone River in Montana. While that oil spilled happened to be conventional crude oil, the pipeline is also used to move corrosive tar sands "diluted bitumen", which has proven nearly impossible to clean after it spills.

"Today's revelation is doubly troubling because Exxon's apparent partner in this tar sands pipeline scheme is Enbridge, the company that owns the line from Ontario to Montreal where it connects to Exxon's line to Portland," said Jim Murphy, an attorney with National Wildlife Federation. "Two years ago Enbridge spilled a million gallons of tar sands oil into the Kalamazoo River, with devastating impacts to the ecology, public health, recreation and property values. Independent review found that extreme negligence led to the spill. These aren't the kind of companies we can trust with Maine's natural resources."

At the news conference, Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor read a statement from Terri Young, a Bangor resident who worked on the Exxon Valdez civil case. Young explained, "It makes me just shudder to know that ExxonMobil is the owner of the pipeline in Maine and is now trying to bring dangerous tar sands oil in Maine. Their reckless disregard for safety and the environment caused untold damage in Alaska."

“This pattern of misleading statements and trying to hide what is really going on is troubling,” said Glen Brand, Executive Director of Sierra Club Maine. “Clearly these pipeline companies are worried that if Maine people and others really see the full picture of what is going on to bring tar sands through the region, they will face even greater public opposition. Exxon and Enbridge have dirty track records with oil and tar sands, so it is understandable why they prefer their dealings to be behind closed doors.”

“Bringing dangerous, toxic tar sands oil through Maine is not in the interest of Maine’s people,” said Voorhees. “Not the people who drink water from Sebago Lake, not the people who fish and swim and paddle on the pristine rivers of Western Maine, not the households and businesses who rely on tourists and summer campers who visit Maine each year, nor the local businesses across the state who rely on a clean environment to produce and export, clean, healthy products, from clams or organic foods. Tar sands and the Maine brand don’t mix.”

“Exxon’s pipeline would move the same blend of toxic tar sands crude that Enbridge spilled into Michigan’s Kalamazoo River,” said Anthony Swift, a pipeline and tar sands expert with NRDC. “We’ve learned from that disaster how damaging and difficult to clean tar sands crude is. While it may be too late to save the Kalamazoo River, it’s not too late to protect New England’s rivers and waterways from tar sands spills.”

“As a landowner and a businessman who depends on the clean waters along the Crooked River, I’ve very concerned about the possibility of tar sands running through this pipeline,” said Lee Margolin, owner of Pennessseewassee Brewing Company in Harrison, ME. “Ale has only four ingredients and one of them is clean water, so it is exceedingly important to quality of my product. I also happen to have a doctorate in biology and understand some of the chemicals involved in tar sands, and I’m a member of a local fishing club—no matter which hat I wear, this proposal makes me very worried.”

“These are companies that don’t have Maine’s interests in mind—to them Maine is just a pass-through on the way to global oil profits,” said Figdor.

Tar sand is a thick, sandy, oily substance being mined and drilled out of the rocks and soil of Alberta. Because of its physical properties, it must be diluted and then transported at very high temperatures and pressures. Even in its diluted form (“diluted bitumen”) tar sands is far more abrasive and corrosive than conventional oil, with a record of greater spills per mile of pipeline. The increased spill risk is compounded by the fact that if spilled, tar sands is more toxic and almost impossible to clean up—as evidenced by the on-going clean-up on the Kalmazoo. In addition, tar sands fuels create 20% more climate changing pollution than traditional oil. This is why tar sands is known as “the dirtiest oil on the planet.”

More information at <http://www.nrcm.org/tarsands.asp>; download factsheet about new analysis from <http://www.nrcm.org/documents/Exxontarsandspipeline.pdf>

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