



## **Another Tar Sands Mine Ignores the Public Interest**

The Oil Sands Environmental Coalition (OSEC), including Alberta Wilderness Association, presented November 6 and 7, 2012 before a joint federal-provincial environmental assessment panel considering another large tar sands mine along the lower Athabasca River. The joint review panel process aims to assess environmental, economic, and social impacts of a project to determine whether it is in the public interest and should proceed. Shell's proposal to expand its Jackpine bitumen mine would increase production at the existing facility by 100,000 barrels per day. Regulators have already approved plans to triple Alberta's

oil sands production to more than five million barrels per day. These approvals fly in the face of serious, unresolved environmental problems with current operations.

OSEC – comprising the Pembina Institute, Alberta Wilderness Association and the Fort McMurray Environmental Association – outlined why Shell's Jackpine mine expansion proposal is not in the public interest and should not be approved. Alberta Wilderness Association emphasized the project's significant contribution to expected irreversible losses of peat wetlands and old-growth forest. Furthermore, AWA underlined the harm to the Athabasca River that will occur during the lowest winter flows

from further water withdrawals.

The coalition's expert panel included University of Alberta scientist Dr. David Schindler, who focused on impacts to the Muskeg River basin, and Dr. Glenn Miller, Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Science at University of Nevada, who outlined risks from unproven end pit lakes in reclamation. Pembina Institute panelists Jennifer Grant, Simon Dyer, and Marc Huot outlined harmful impacts to wildlife, including species at risk, and unacceptably high predicted air emission impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions.

- Carolyn Campbell