

Oil Sands Producers Hear Directly from Canadians CEOs discuss the results to date of the different conversation

CALGARY, ALBERTA (January 8, 2009) – Canada's oil sands producers have heard directly from Canadians over the past six months through an initiative called *Canada's Oil Sands: a different conversation*. Input from www.canadasoilsands.ca has been validated by targeted in-depth opinion polling to give the oil sands industry a candid perspective of the views of Canadians on the development of the oil sands.

Three key themes have emerged thus far from the discussion:

- Canadians believe that it is possible to develop the oil sands while protecting the environment.
- Canadians do not believe that oil sands companies are doing enough today to reduce environmental impacts.
- When considering oil sands environmental issues, Canadians are most concerned about the impact of the projects on fresh water, and about greenhouse gas emissions from the oil sands.

"Canadians are telling us that we need to do better," said Bruce March, CEO of Imperial Oil. "We have received a clear message: the economic and energy security benefits of the oil sands cannot come at the expense of the environment. We are encouraged to find Canadians believe, as we do, that responsible development of the oil sands is possible."

Other themes have emerged from the conversation as well. Canadians believe that technology is a large part of the solution to oil sands environmental issues. Indeed, specific technological ideas have been debated on the program website. Canadians also want to be confident that there is strict regulatory oversight of these major projects. Finally, the conversation shows broad recognition of the importance of the oil sands to the Canadian economy and to Canadian energy security.

"We can address some areas of public concern by doing a better job of clearly explaining our business," said Marcel Coutu, CEO of Canadian Oil Sands Trust. "There are some wild misconceptions in the public about this industry. But at the same time, we must recognize those issues, such as greenhouse gas emissions, where the environmental footprint today is larger than conventional crude oil production. We need to work to reduce that impact."

Thousands of Canadians have participated in this initiative. The website has an open discussion forum, which has attracted participation from a wide range of perspectives. As well, a series of "daily questions" received thoughtful input. All of the results, including full results of the opinion polling, are available on the website.

Canada's oil sands

a different conversation

Having listened to the views of Canadians for the last six months, oil sands producers are now talking about what they heard and encouraging further discussion. They are beginning the conversation about what the industry does and can do to address the concerns of Canadians, find solutions to outstanding issues, and achieve the balance that Canadians believe is possible.

All observers, whether supporters or opponents, can agree that oil sands development is a project of national importance and impact, that warrants a national conversation. Canadians are encouraged to participate in this conversation at www.canadasoilsands.ca.

For more information on this initiative, please call:

Travis Davies
CAPP
(403) 267-1151

Background

Public input to this initiative has come through public input to the website, through public outreach initiatives by individual companies, and through opinion polling. The quantitative opinion polling results align with the qualitative input from the other sources.

Public Opinion Polling

The opinion polling was conducted by academic researchers in June of 2008. 425 respondents in each of Edmonton and Toronto participated in a 60-question telephone survey. Results are based on a confidence interval of 95 per cent and sampling error of 4.8 per cent. CAPP intends to conduct this survey again early in 2009, and to broaden the survey beyond Edmonton and Toronto. The full survey results are available on www.canadasoilsands.ca. Some of the most relevant findings are as follows:

- 42% of respondents have a positive view of the oil sands. 30% have a negative view of the oil sands.
- 46% of respondents believe the oil sands companies have not done a good job at balancing the environment and the economy. Only 22% believe that the industry has been able to achieve this balance to date.
- 71% of respondents believe it is possible to achieve the economic benefits of the oil sands while also protecting the environment. Only 11% disagree that this balance is possible.
- Concern about impacts on freshwater supply was cited as the single most significant oil sands environmental issue by respondents (26%). Impact on local wildlife and habitat was the second most cited issued at 19%.
- 63% of respondents believe that Canada benefits from the development of the oil sands. 19% disagree with this statement.
- 64% of Canadians believe that the oil sands are important to providing a secure supply of Canada's future oil needs.
- Public trust in oil sands companies is weak. 50% of respondents do not believe what oil and gas executives say in the media, compared with only 13% who do. Similarly, 44% of respondents do not believe information provided by oil and gas companies. Only 20% agree that they do believe such information.
- With a few exceptions, there is little substantial divergence between the Edmonton results and the Toronto results. Edmontonians are generally more favourable towards the oil sands industry than Torontonians. Particularly on questions around the environmental responsibility of the industry, Toronto respondents have a more negative view than Edmonton respondents.

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Website

- The website has attracted over 50,000 unique visits. While the large majority of users of the site are Canadian, we have also had visits from over 100 other countries.
- There have been over 250 comments posted in the public discussion forum on the website, and an additional 150 comments in response to “today’s question.”
- While the discussion forum is moderated, we have not had to remove any comments.