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Tar sands oil

MEPs reject plans to ease way for tar sands oil in Europe

The European Parliament's environment committee today voted to reject new fuel quality rules proposed by the EU Commission, which failed to include a separate methodology for assessing greenhouse gas emissions from tar sands oil (1). After the vote, Green climate change spokesperson **Bas Eickhout**, who co-sponsored the rejection, said:

"Tar sands oil should not and cannot be part of the European fuel mix. The production of oil from tar sands is not only dirty and damaging to the environment, it also has a far greater impact on climate change than conventional oil. If the EU is serious about combatting climate change, it needs to be consistent with all its policies.

"In voting for this rejection, MEPs have voted against easing the way for tar sands oil to enter the European market. Despite the spin, tar sands oil has nothing to do with European energy security but is instead merely about placating the Canadian government in the context of the EU-Canada trade agreement. We do not need this highly-polluting fuel and we should not be encouraging its production.

"The bigger picture is the future of the fuel quality directive itself. It was one of the 5 legislative measures adopted by the EU at the end of 2008 as part of its climate and energy package and is a crucial piece of legislation that should deliver actual emissions reductions for 2020 and beyond. Today's vote should be seen as the basis for providing a robust methodology for EU fuel quality rules beyond 2020."

(1) Under the EU's fuel quality directive, suppliers are obliged to reduce the lifecycle greenhouse gas intensity of transport fuel 6% by 2020 (compared to 2010). Originally, the idea was to have separate default values for calculating the lifecycle emissions of different sources of fossil fuels, so oil from tar sands would have its own greenhouse gas intensity value, separate to conventional oil. However, earlier this year, the Commission came out with a new proposal, with no separate method for tar sands oil. This would essentially make it much easier for increasing the share of oil from tar sands on the European market.

Today's vote by the environment committee must now be confirmed by the European Parliament plenary as a whole.

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Responsible MEPs



Bas Eickhout

Co-President

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