



BEAVER LAKE CREE NATION

PRESS RELEASE

Beaver Lake Cree Nation adds its voice to those outraged by BP and Husky Energy's Sunrise tar sands extraction project

December 3, 2010, Lac La Biche, Alberta - As oil giant BP and its partner Husky Energy Inc. announced plans to move forward with the large-scale Sunrise project, Beaver Lake Cree Nation's Chief and Council say the extraction project demonstrates why First Nations need to remain strong in the fight to stop the ecologically disastrous plan.

Beaver Lake Cree Nation Chief Lameman said Monday's announcement that Sunrise will proceed came as a shock, given BP's poor record for environmental management strategies. "Once again we are very disappointed and dismayed at the growing lack of concern and disrespect that is being shown to our Mother Earth and to us as the Indigenous Peoples and the true stewards of the land. This continues to happen despite the growing scientific knowledge and proof such as the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf, the major oil spill in the American midwest and the recent repeated incident with the waterfowl at the tar sands and others that are too numerous to name.

"It falls to us as stewards of the land to stand in the path of these projects, and hold government accountable for allowing them to proceed at the cost of our land, animals and water," said Chief Lameman. "We launched a court action in May 2008 and we intend to see it through to keep companies like BP from destroying our traditional territories and rendering our guaranteed treaty rights to hunt, fish, trap and gather meaningless."

It is reported the oil company expects Sunrise to pump 200,000 barrels a day by 2020. BP put the project on hold several times because of concerns raised by activist shareholders about the high concentration of greenhouse gases and toxic waste that pose an environmental risk.

Said Chief Lameman, "It is because of projects like this that we no longer see caribou in our territory. We were forced to take a separate legal action to protect the caribou and if these developments are allowed to continue at an unmitigated rate, we will have to take action to also protect our moose, our deer, our fish and our birds."

In September 2010, Beaver Lake Cree Nation along with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Enoch Cree Nation launched court proceedings to force the federal government to uphold its legal duty to protect the habitat of the woodland caribou, which are now a threatened species. The judicial review application asks the court to force Canada's environment minister to prepare a recovery strategy for woodland caribou and to recommend that Cabinet make an emergency order to protect woodland caribou in northeastern Alberta under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The order would entail introducing a moratorium on all new developments within the areas where caribou herds are known to be threatened.

“We know that oil companies like BP can make a huge profit producing oil for under \$30 a barrel while the market price sits at over \$80 a barrel. But we also know the oil sands deposits can only produce for around another 50 years. When it's over, we are left with the mess. A barren ecological disaster. And if we allow all the oil in the tar sands to be burned, our planet faces runaway climate catastrophe. I am not prepared to sit by and let that happen,” stated Chief Lameman.

Beaver Lake Cree Nation adds its voice to those that are expressing outrage over this latest development. Chief Lameman: “With so many warning signs all around us and the continued assault on our fundamental rights and freedoms isn't it about time all of us wake up and unite around this issue that is going to inevitably affect the legacy of all of our future generations? Because when disaster strikes it will not discriminate; it will affect all of our grandchildren, no matter the race, color or creed. So in my mind the almighty dollar is definitely not worth the sacrifice of the wellbeing of my grandchildren and great grandchildren.”

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