

**Open letter to:**

The Norwegian Government,  
attention of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg

**The government must instruct the Board of Statoil to withdraw the company from Canadian tar sand.**

The Norwegian oil company Statoil's engagement in extraction of oil from tar sand in the traditional homeland of some of Canada's First Nations has been controversial from the start in 2007. Warnings of negative impact on local communities, the environment and the climate from the oil industries' devastating extractions, have proved well founded. Documentation of damages is mounting, as also confirmed in a recently published paper in the highly reputable scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.

Both scientists and the affected First Nations have long opposed the environmentally destructive extraction of tar sands, due to increased occurrence of cancer and other serious health issues.

In order to prevent further expansion of tar sands development on their traditional territory, the Beaver Lake Cree Nation are taking the Canadian Government and Alberta Provincial Government to court, in accordance with their rights in the Canadian constitution. The rights of Canadian First Nations (Treaty 6 Rights of 1876) are firmly rooted in the Canadian constitution. The upcoming trial will involve all operators in the traditional territory of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation, including Statoil's Kai Kos Dehseh - project, covering an area approximately the size of the Norwegian National Park of Jotunheimen.

Beaver Lake Cree demand termination of all further development, in order to protect their traditional rights, culture and habitat with fragile Boreal forests and wetlands that have sustained numerous generations of their people. They cannot accept an exploitation that will jeopardize the health of a great many people. Tar sands deposits in Beaver Lake Cree's territory are substantial, and Ca. 50 % of the oil companies' expansions are planned here. The consequences of the Beaver Lake Cree's trial v. the Canadian state and provisional authorities in 2015 may be invalid permits for the operators, thus forcing Statoil to close its' controversial engagement in the tar sands of Alberta. In that case, the Norwegian state will, as majority shareholder, bear responsibility for having contributed to juridically documented violations of Canadian First Nations' rights.

Extraction of unconventional fossil resources, such as tar sand and shale gas, is incompatible with the international society's aim to limit the global warming to 2 degrees. We know that considerable parts of the world's fossil reserves must remain in the ground. Withdrawing from or not entering into projects with high emissions of greenhouse gases per produced unit, and extractions in disputed or vulnerable regions, is the obvious place to start.

Both in Norway and abroad, experts and a broad spectrum of civil society have for some time unanimously demanded that Statoil's extraction of oil from tar sands in Alberta must end. We have noted that Statoil's "Oil Sands Report 2012" shows some improvement regarding emissions of greenhouse gasses from tar sands per produced barrel of bitumen. Nevertheless, the level of emissions from this production is unacceptably high in comparison with Norway's climate goals. Compared to oil from the North Sea e.g., the greenhouse gas emissions are 10 - 12 times higher per produced barrel of oil from tar sands. Thus Statoil' s ambitions of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from their plant in Alberta with 40 % per barrel bitumen by 2025 does not alter the fact that these

hugely resource demanding production methods causes extremely damaging emissions of greenhouse gases as well as environmental poisons.

Prior to Statoil's General Assembly in 2012, 28 organizations and political parties representing a broad spectrum of the Norwegian society, urged the General Assembly to instruct Statoil's Board to withdraw from Canadian tar sands. Reference was made to the considerable social responsibility of a state - controlled company like Statoil. The Board of Statoil nevertheless recommended continued production in Alberta. Shareholders representing equities for 10 billion NOK - equivalent to the third largest shareholding - voted *no* or *abstained from voting* in reaction to the Board's recommendation. Thus the Government's vote for continued tar sands exploitation became decisive.

In connection with the General Assembly of May 14th 2013, shareholders will once again demand that the Board of Statoil must terminate the company's tar sands production in Alberta. We, the undersigned, believe that the state - as principal shareholder - now must exercise its right to instruct Statoil's Board to withdraw the company from Canadian tar sands exploitation.

We find Statoil's tar sands exploitation incompatible with the company's own guidelines for sustainable development and environment. We do not believe that it is in the interest of the Norwegian government, and accordingly the Norwegian society, to be co-responsible for an operation with so many negative aspects. In addition to the substantial negative impact on the Canadian nature and peoples of the First Nations, the exploitation involves a considerable economical risk, both for Statoil and for Norway. As the government is majority shareholder in Statoil, Norwegian citizens consequently share the responsibility, both for the likely financial losses on a long term, and for the failed ethical considerations of today.

Both at home and abroad Statoil has enjoyed a reputation as an environmentally and security-conscious company. But decisions such as the continued strong engagement in the Canadian tar sand industry, along with acquisitions in American shale gas and -oil, and Statoil's participation in the US oil lobby (Consumer Energy Alliance) is harmful to the company's reputation. This in turn, reflects unfavourably on the Norwegian state as the company's principal shareholder.

We therefore strongly urge the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Statoil is withdrawn from Canadian tar sands. We cannot accept that the Norwegian people indirectly becomes co-responsible for a controversial activity that is neither consistent with Norwegian policy of ownership, Norwegian policy towards indigenous peoples, nor Norwegian climate policy goals.

We look forward to your reply to our letter.

With regards,

Concerned Scientists Norway, chair Beate Sjøfjell

Church of Norway, Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, leader Kjetil Aano

Grandparents Climate Campaign, Norway, leader Halfdan Wiik,

Greenpeace Norway, leader Truls Gulowsen

Sami Church Council, Church of Norway, leader Anne Dalheim

WWF-Norway, secretary-general Nina Jensen

Attac Norway, leader Benedikte Pryneid Hansen

Bellona, leader Frederick Hauge

Bærekraftig Follo , leader Wendy Fjellstad  
Changemaker Norway, leader Ingrid Aas Borge  
Digni, secretary-general Jørn Lemvik  
Friends of the Earth Norway, leader Lars Haltbrekken  
Folkeaksjonen oljefritt Lofoten, Vesterålen og Senja, leader Bjørn Kjensli  
For Jernbane, leader Kjell Erik Onsrud  
Foreningen for Ressursbasert Økonomi, leader Stina Jacobsen  
Green Youth, spokesperson Hallvard Surlien  
Nature and Youth, leader Silje Lundberg  
Norges Sosiale Forum, leader Nina Skranefjell  
Norwegian Church Aid, secretary-general Anne-Marie Helland  
Norwegian Green Party, spokesperson Hanna Markussen  
Norwegian network on climate and health, leader Lars Thore Fadnes  
Norwegian Young Christian Democrats, leader Elisabeth Løland  
Red Youth, leader Seher Aydar  
Student Christian Movemet, Norway, leader Sara Moss  
Spire – the Development Fund's youth organization, leader Harald Sakarias - Hansen  
The Developement Fund, leader Andrew P. Kroglund  
The Norwegian Christian Democratic Party, acting leader Dagrun Eriksen  
The Future in Our Hands - FIOH, leader Arild Hermstad  
The Liberal Party of Norway, leader Trine Skei Grande  
The Norwegian Climate Network, chair Aleksander Melli  
The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM), secretary-general Andrew Preston  
The Red Party, leader Bjørnar Moxnes  
The Socialist Youth League of Norway, leader Andreas Christiansen Halse  
The young liberals of Norway, leader Sveinung Rotevatn  
Unio, Confederation of unions for professionals, leader Anders Folkestad  
Worker's Youth Leauge, Norway, leader Eskil Pedersen

Copy:

The Parliament, by represented political parties  
Board of Statoil ASA  
Statoil' s Cooperate Assembly  
Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Ola Borten Moe