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Mr. Jorma Ollila
Royal Dutch Shell plc
PO box 162
2501 AN The Hague
The Netherlands

In Brussels, December 11th 2009

Dear Mr. Ollila,

At the moment, the eyes of the world are focused on Copenhagen. The biggest international climate negotiations of all time just started on Monday and will reach their high-point at the end of next week, when high-level representatives of over 190 countries will hopefully reach an agreement on the key issues of the new global climate agreement.

We are writing to you because of the activities of your company in Canada.

While no-one is looking, another kind of record is being broken in Alberta, Canada. European companies are investing heavily in the dirtiest fossil fuel of all time: tar sand. Tar sands are found under boreal forests and wetlands in Alberta. They contain about 10% crude bitumen, which can be converted to oil. This conversion can however not be done without massive impacts on the environment.

Currently, most of the tar sand is extracted from open-pit mines with a whole network of upgraders, refineries and pipelines spreading across huge areas. The bulk of known tar sand reserves is however situated deeper underground, which means even more energy intensive methods must be used to bring them to the surface: high-pressure steam must be injected into the ground to soften the bitumen, which can then be pumped up from the ground.

The environmental and health impacts of tar sand extraction are massive. The production of a barrel of tar sand oil is two-three times more carbon intensive than the production of traditional oil. This number does not take into account the land-use change impacts from destroying the natural carbon sinks, forests or peatlands, as there is not enough scientific data to estimate them. Other negative impacts of tar sand production include severe air and water pollution, destruction of the livelihoods of local indigenous communities, loss of biodiversity and production of toxic waste.

Today, more than 1.3 million barrels of tar sand oil is being produced every day in Canada. The oil companies active in the area aim to expand their production to more than 5.4 million barrels per day by 2041. This activity makes the citizens of Alberta the second largest per capita emitters in the world - only Qatar has higher greenhouse gas emissions per person.



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Right now, during the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, the interest of some energy companies in this massively destructive energy source is difficult to understand. The momentum for the creation of a global low-carbon economy and turning away from fossil fuels is stronger than ever before. Last year, marked by global recession, the cleantech industries grew their markets to another record level. The solar photovoltaics (PV), wind power, and biofuels sectors kept up a blistering growth rate, increasing 53 percent from \$75.8 billion in 2007 to \$115.9 billion in revenues in 2008. Still some companies are closing their eyes from the reality and taking full advantage of the fact that Canada is one of the last industrialised countries not committed to mitigate climate change.

What worries us as members of the European Parliament is that many of the companies investing in this destructive activity are European. Among others, British Petroleum, Total and Statoil have massive plans to expand their tar sand business, as unfortunately does Shell.

We strongly believe that these companies should act as responsible corporate citizens and do their part for climate protection also outside the borders of the European Union. This would mean a turn away from the tar sands and towards clean energy sources. We would therefore like to appeal to you as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Shell to consider the future of our planet and to cease your tar sand activities in Alberta.

Sincerely Yours,

Satu Hassi
Member of the European Parliament

Rebecca Harms
Member of the European Parliament

Corinne Lepage
Member of the European Parliament

Bas Eickhout
Member of the European Parliament



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