

**Corporate Ethics International * Earthworks * Environment America * Environmental Defence Canada
Friends of the Earth * Natural Resources Defense Council * National Wildlife Federation * Sierra Club
Western Organization of Resource Councils**

May 25, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to oppose the expansion and continued use of dirty fuels. The expanding oil spill disaster in the Gulf demonstrates the need to end our dependence on fossil fuels and reject increasingly destructive and dirty sources of energy. Deepening our reliance on dirty fuels—tar sands, liquid coal, and oil shale—will increase greenhouse gas emissions, undermine efforts to build a clean energy future, and destroy critical land, air and water resources.

Our dependence on fossil energy is economically and environmentally unsustainable. Rather than investing in the policies needed to reduce our dependence on oil and promote a clean energy economy, fossil fuel companies are successfully lobbying Congress to invest in increasingly energy intensive and destructive sources in the hopes of garnering miniscule increases in domestic production. This is not a tenable solution to our energy problems, and it will come at great environmental and economic cost.

Tar sands, liquid coal, and oil shale all have unacceptable impacts on human health, our natural resources, and the economy. Each of these fuels emits far more greenhouse gases than conventional oil and their production results in higher emissions of other dangerous air pollutants. Air and water pollution from tar sands and coal have been associated with elevated disease levels in the communities where the fuels are mined or refined. These dirty fuels also demand large quantities of water for extraction and refining, a significant issue in the water-scarce West where many oil shale and liquid coal projects are planned.

The destructive extraction of these fuels is well-documented. Tar sands are strip mined and drilled from beneath the Boreal Forest, the great carbon reservoir and migratory bird nesting ground of North America. If large-scale oil shale development moves forward, pristine Western vistas will be turned into a maze of industrial development. The commercialization of liquid coal would result in dramatic increases in the highly-destructive coal extraction processes, like mountaintop removal and strip-mining.

The U.S. must take bold action to address these threats. Policy-makers must send a clear signal to domestic energy providers that our nation will lead the world in developing a new generation of clean energy sources, not new investments in dirty energy. They also must send a strong message to the Canadian government that the environmental and human health threats associated with tar sands extraction are unacceptable. Your administration has already taken great strides in requiring clean cars. We can achieve even more oil reductions by requiring large trucks to increase fuel efficiency, incentivizing plug in hybrids and investing in public transit and alternatives to driving.

Strong comprehensive climate and energy legislation that eliminates the market for dirty fuels and quickly transitions our economy to clean energy would send this message and truly begin the transition to a clean energy economy.

Going forward, the U.S. government should reject incentives for dirty fuels development, repeal existing policies that benefit dirty fuels including public subsidies, and refuse new infrastructure to import and refine dirty fuels. Instead, we should seek policies that support the growth of domestic, clean energy sources and improve efficiency. We should not allow our clean energy future to be derailed by the world's dirtiest fuels.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Majority Leader Harry Reid