

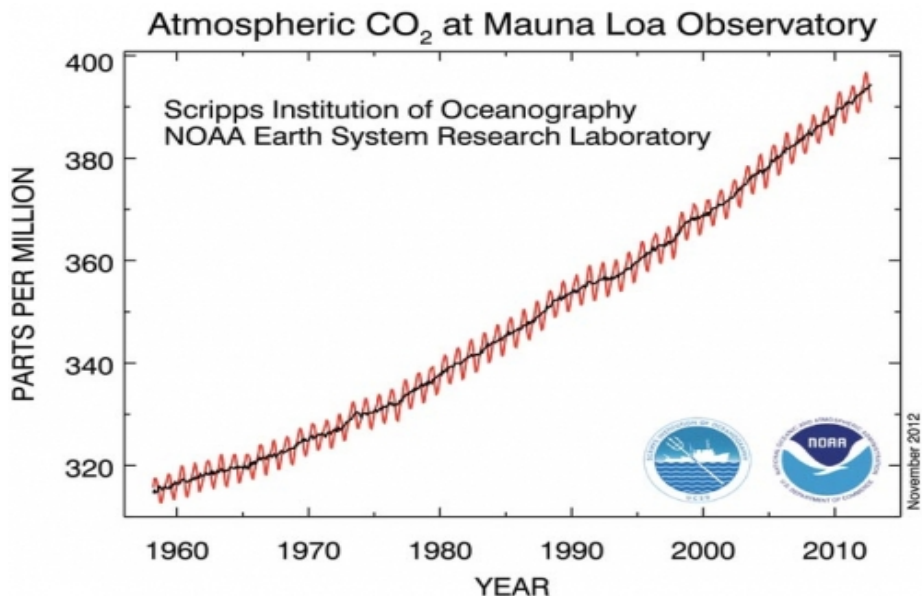
## Canadians Resisting Climate Change Despite Inaction at UN Talks

After the failure of UN climate negotiations in Copenhagen, Cancún and Durban over the last three years, it is difficult to be optimistic about the current round of talks in Doha, Qatar. The negotiations remain stalemated as parties reiterate their entrenched positions, or retreat backward as Canada did when it withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol which obliges developed countries to reduce their emissions.

The impasse continues despite evidence that climate change is already contributing to nearly 400,000 deaths a year. Sea levels are now rising 60% faster than had been predicted by the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, worsening storm surges and putting at risk populations such as the ten million people who live on low-lying Pacific Islands.

While delegates to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have agreed on little else, they have all said they want to limit global temperature increases to no more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. But the relentless growth in greenhouse gas emissions, as illustrated in the chart on atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, is making the two degree goal unattainable. Instead the World Bank says we are headed towards a four degree average temperature increase by 2100. Other projections say we are on track for temperature increases as high as six degrees on average and up to 15 degrees in the Arctic. More ominously, the UN Environmental Programme now warns that melting permafrost could push climate change past a tipping point leading to runaway temperature increases endangering life on Earth.

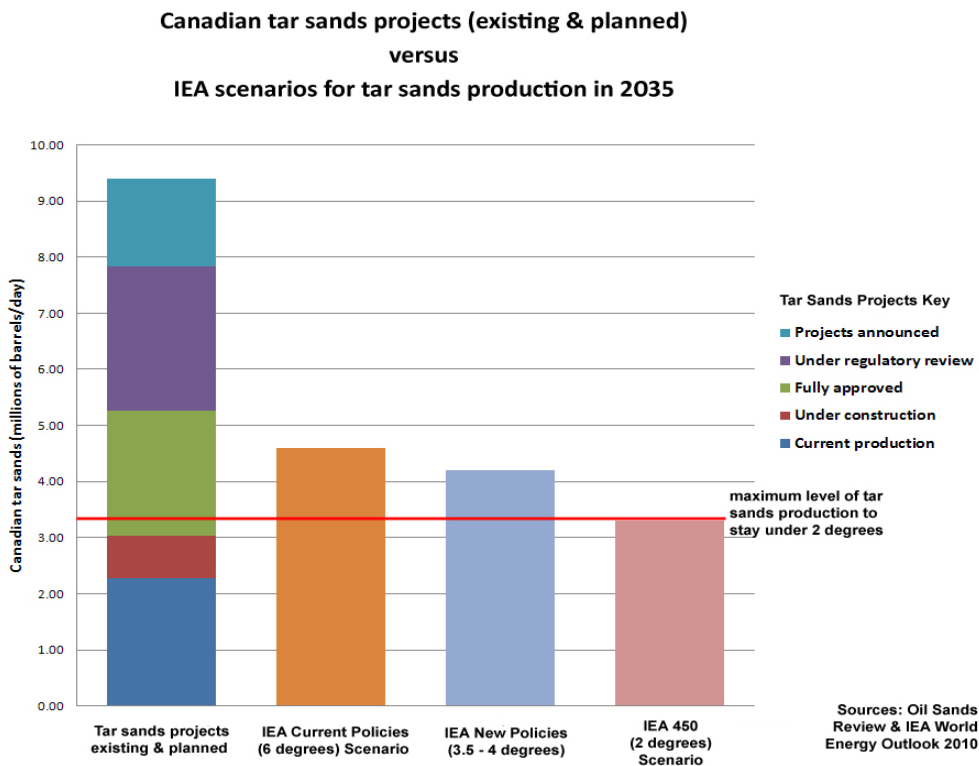
**Chart 1: Increasing Greenhouse Gas Emissions**



According to scientific evidence industrialized countries would have to reduce their emissions to 40% to 50% below their 1990 levels by 2020 if we are to have a fifty-fifty chance of meeting the two degree target. Canada's current voluntary target of lowering emissions to 17% below 2005 levels translates into a 2.5% emission **increase** over 1990 levels by 2020. Yet Canada is not on track to meet even this diminished, unambitious target.

Perhaps the most startling new data to emerge on the eve of the Doha talks is the admission by the International Energy Agency that if we are to limit global warming to two degrees, then two-thirds of remaining proven fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground. This projection constitutes a particular challenge for the Canadian government and the petroleum industry, who are committed to increased tar sands production despite the fact that emissions from the production and upgrading of bitumen are 3.2 to 4.5 times more carbon intensive than conventional oil extraction.

The following chart from Greenpeace demonstrates the incompatibility of tar sands expansion and the two degrees target. The horizontal red line shows that tar sands production must not exceed 3.3 million barrels per day if we are to keep the increase in global warming below two degrees. In 2010, KAIROS adopted a policy entitled *Drawing a Line in the Sand* calling for no further approvals of new tar sands projects. At the time tar sands projects in production, under construction or already approved amounted to 3.3 million barrels a day. In other words, the tar sands were already reaching the limit compatible with two degrees of warming. As the graph demonstrates projects completed, under construction or approved since that date are pushing daily production above the 4.5 million barrels a day level congruent with a six degree temperature increase. If other projects under review or announced are also approved, then tar sands capacity could rise above 9 million barrels a day more than twice the level compatible with a two degree temperature increase.



While the prospects for a new climate agreement at Doha are dim, there is indeed hope that the relentless expansion of Canadian emissions due to the tar sands can be halted. This hope arises not from diplomatic manoeuvres at UN conferences. It emanates from the actions of Indigenous peoples, ecologists, youth and social justice movements who are standing firm against the construction or expansion of pipelines to export tar sands crude to new markets. The U.S. market for tar sands products is dwindling with the rapid growth in oil production within the United States. Hence the Canadian government and the oil corporations are pinning their hopes on new export pipelines such as Northern Gateway, the expansion of the existing Trans Mountain pipeline, or the reversal of Enbridge's Line 9 to send tar sands bitumen East for export through Atlantic ports.

In each of these cases, coalitions led by Indigenous peoples asserting their rights to Free Prior and Informed Consent before dangerous pipelines can cross their territories are also resisting catastrophic climate change.