



Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford during Question Period in the House of Commons. The energy file will be front and centre when the House resumes sitting in mid-September. PMO photo

A Vision for Responsible Development of Canada's Resources

Greg Rickford

Canada's energy priorities—accessing new markets, strengthening global energy security, enhancing safety and environmental regulation, forging stronger relationships with aboriginal peoples, and investing in innovation—demonstrate our determination to ensure we can all enjoy the maximum benefit of our country's energy resources.

Canada is fortunate to have abundant natural resources that contribute to the strength of our communities and the prosperity of our country. The resource industry provides employment to 1.8 million Canadians and contributes substantially to our economy from coast to coast to coast. Furthermore, this sector contributes over \$32 billion a year in government revenues that help build schools, hospitals and other important services for Canadians. The government's vision for the future of resource development is the continued responsible

development of our natural resources for the benefit of all Canadians. We are demonstrating leadership in environmental protection, safety, Aboriginal engagement and non-emitting electricity. Only through continued actions in these critical areas will Canadians be able to fully realize the economic and societal benefits that resource development provides.

First, I would like to highlight some of the fundamentals of Canada's resource sector. Canada has the third-largest proven oil reserves in the world, with approximately 173 billion barrels. With advances in technology, Canada's oil sands have the potential to yield nearly double that amount. We have an estimated 1,300 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, which is enough to last for 200 years at current levels of demand. These energy resources allow Canada to provide a safe and reliable supply of energy to our allies. Currently, the only customer for our oil and gas is the United States. Recent discoveries of domestic supply will allow the US to achieve energy independence in the coming years. Without new markets, our resources will be stranded. It is for this reason that our government strongly believes that we must diversify our energy markets both here at home and abroad.

We are taking action to ensure we have a world class safety system for the transportation of our energy products. A safe and efficient transportation system will allow Canada to move energy resources to world markets.

Pipeline projects that will bring Western Canadian oil and gas to Eastern Canada will displace foreign oil with Canadian product. I think all Canadians will agree that they would rather fill their cars with locally sourced gasoline, rather than imported oil from a place like Algeria. On the international front, recent events in Europe have made it clear that energy security is central to global political and economic stability. At this year's meeting of G7 energy ministers in Rome, I advocated for the adoption of a number of criti-

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cal principles to support energy security. These same principles apply to the North American context, beginning with the development of diverse energy options, from oil and gas to nuclear, renewables and hydroelectricity. This transformation means advancing innovative approaches to support the responsible development of our energy resources and reduce our overall energy use. It also means building and maintaining safe and modern energy infrastructure to increase our capacity to supply growing markets in North America, Europe and Asia.

The development of our resources does not have to come at the expense of the environment. The government has been clear that no major resource project will proceed unless it is safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. Canada has a strong record of safety in the development and transportation of our energy resources, and we are constantly working to improve on that record. We are taking action to ensure we have a world class safety system for the transportation of our energy products. A safe and efficient transportation system will allow Canada to move energy resources to world markets. We have already introduced comprehensive measures for tankers and pipelines to ensure world-class safety, and we will continue to implement additional safety measures for rail. Together, these measures will ensure that Canada's energy transportation system—on land and on water—is among the safest in the world.

In Canada, pipeline companies are regulated by the National Energy Board, an independent body that subjects pipeline development proposals to an extensive scientific review that ensures pipelines are safe. It is for this reason that Canada can boast a safety record of 99.999 per cent for federally regulated pipelines. But we recognize

that we can do better, and that is why we are taking further action.

New environmental protections for pipelines and tankers include major increases in surveillance inspections, safety audits and the powers of enforcement. For example, this year we announced the introduction of absolute liability for all federally regulated pipelines, meaning companies will be liable for costs and damages regardless of fault. We are raising the liability from \$30 million in the Atlantic and \$40 million in the Arctic to \$1 billion for all major oil pipelines. Companies continue to have unlimited liability when at fault or negligent.

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Another vital aspect of our world-class safety system is the way it involves local communities in planning, operations and related opportunities, including aboriginal communities. Aboriginal communities have the local knowledge and expertise needed to make these plans work, and it is essential that they are directly involved. We are working to ensure that the actions we take to establish a stronger relationship with First Nations are shaped by First Nations themselves, based on the principles of trust, inclusion and reconciliation. I recently announced the creation of the Major Project Management Office West and the establishment of a Tripartite Forum, two initiatives designed to bring the federal government, the province of British Columbia and First Nations

leaders together to share information and make decisions on projects and responsible resource development.

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These engagement measures complement our government's efforts to protect the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency and supporting the development of clean technology. Canada's resource potential extends far beyond oil. Canada has developed one of the world's cleanest electricity systems, with over 75 percent of our supply coming from emission-free sources: hydropower, nuclear and

non-hydro renewable energy. In fact, we lead the G7 with our renewable resources accounting for over 63 percent of electricity production.

We have taken significant action to reduce our reliance on energy sources that are harmful to the environment. We recognize that coal is the single largest source of greenhouse gases in the world. That is why, in 2012, we were the first major coal user to ban construction of traditional coal-fired power plants. Under our leadership, per-capita carbon emissions have fallen to their lowest level since tracking began. In fact, emissions in 2012 were 5.1 per cent lower than their 2005 levels, while the economy grew by 10.6 per cent over the same period. We have achieved these impressive results without raising taxes on hardworking Canadians.

Innovation and new technologies are instrumental to supporting responsible energy use. We can be proud that Canada is making

real progress and showing real leadership in this area. In 2011, the International Energy Agency ranked Canada second for its rate of energy efficiency improvement. We are investing in next-generation clean technologies through our continued support of Sustainable Development Technology Canada. We will continue to take action on clean energy through these important initiatives.

All of these initiatives—accessing new markets, strengthening global energy security, enhancing safety and environmental regulation, forging stronger relationships with aboriginal peoples, and investing in innovation—demonstrate our determination to ensure we can all enjoy the maximum benefit of our country's energy resources. **P**

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