Fossil Fuel Fact Check

Fighting climate disinformation and misleading oil and gas industry narratives

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER
May 2026

environmental defence

Summary

Misinformation and disinformation about climate change is on the rise, with dangerous consequences. From conspiracy theories to more benign-seeming false narratives, mis/disinformation[1] undermines the public's understanding of climate issues, causes and solutions. This can erode trust in climate solutions and weaken the political support needed to advance climate policies. Strong government leadership is critical to regulate highly polluting industries, create incentives that shape consumer, business, and investment behaviour, and mobilize resources at scale through the legal authority governments hold.

Burning fossil fuels is the primary cause of the climate crisis. Despite this, conflicting information about oil, gas, and coal is abundant, as are pro-fossil fuel industry narratives. These narratives are political and cultural, and shape what society collectively believes to be true and to be possible. Mainstream perspectives on oil and gas have, in part, been shaped by fossil fuel companies' ability to fund extensive, expensive, and influential advertising campaigns for decades. While awareness about climate change has been steadily increasing in the past few decades, information delivered to the public from traditional and social media sources about fossil fuels and fossil fuel companies often lacks the climate context. Similarly, research from Carleton University's Re.Climate initiative finds that media coverage about climate change often omits how fossil fuels have caused and continue to accelerate the crisis.[2]

Fossil fuel extraction is highly politicized, yet oil and gas industry narratives in Canada are normalized throughout our information ecosystems. Fighting mis/disinformation, and providing critical context alongside information about the fossil fuel industry and its products, helps reduce the barriers to effective climate action.

This backgrounder raises the alarm about climate mis- and disinformation, highlights common pro-fossil fuel narratives, and provides journalists with critical context for reporting on climate change and the fossil fuel industry.

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[1] Disinformation is information that is deliberately false or misleading. Misinformation describes when false or misleading information is spread without the knowledge or necessarily harmful intent of those sharing the information. Both are being actively spread about climate change, and are significant interrelated problems. For example, disinformation generated and spread by anti-climate interests may then be repeated as misinformation by uninformed members of the public.

[2] Hatch, C., Alrasheed, G., Bider, E., Narayanamoorthy, N. (2024). Climate Change and Solutions in Canada's National Media. Re.Climate. Available at: https://reclimate.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Re.Climate-Report-Media-Coverage-2024-v1.pdf

Problem: Climate Misinformation is on the Rise

Around the world, researchers and climate experts are raising alarm about the rapid spread of climate mis/disinformation. Research by the International Panel on the Information Environment, an independent global organization of scientists based in Switzerland, reviewed 300 studies and found that climate lies and denialism remain widespread, while disinformation strategies continue to evolve.[3] For example, large campaigns are now being run to discredit climate solutions. Disinformation is seeded online where bots and trolls then amplify false narratives. According to the research, climate mis/disinformation is increasingly being targeted at political leaders, civil servants and regulatory agencies to try and delay climate action.

The danger of disinformation was also highlighted in a 2024 report published by the Government of Canada, titled *Disruptions on the Horizon,* which identified and ranked the ten most likely and ten most impactful disruptions to Canadian society. In the report, the risk that "people cannot tell what is true and what is not" was ranked as the most likely to occur, anticipated by 2027, and the eighth most impactful disruption. On both top ten lists, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse - which is being fueled by climate change - is ranked second among the most likely and most impactful disruptions.[4]

Polls consistently show that the majority of Canadians believe in and are concerned about climate change.[5] Yet, as a concrete example of how pervasive climate misinformation is, fewer than half of Canadians identified burning fossil fuels as the primary driver of climate change—even when given a list of options.[6]

Mis/Disinformation from Politicians

Academics have begun studying the role of political elites in driving misinformation. Research published in the International Journal of Press/Politics found that "politicians associated with (radical) right-wing populist parties do spread more online misinformation than their mainstream counterparts" and that "radical-right populism is the strongest determinant for the propensity to spread misinformation."[7] Meanwhile, populism in general, left-wing populism, and right-wing politics were not found to be linked to the spread of misinformation.

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[3] International Panel on the Information Environment [E. Elbeyi, K. Bruhn Jensen, M. Aronczyk, J. Asuka, G. Ceylan, J. Cook, G. Erdelyi, H. Ford, C. Milani, E. Mustafaraj, F. Ogenga, S. Yadin, P. N. Howard, S. Valenzuela (eds.)], "Information Integrity about Climate Science: A Systematic Review," Zurich, Switzerland: IPIE, 2025. Synthesis Report, SR2025.1, doi: 10.61452/BTZP3426.

[4] Policy Horizons Canada (2024). *Disruptions on the Horizon: 2024 Report*, Government of Canada. Available at: https://horizons.service.canada.ca/en/2024/disruptions/#report

[5] Angus Reid Institute (2025). *Environment & Climate Change*. Available at: https://angusreid.org/environment-climate-change/

[6] Re.Climate (2024). *Views on Clean Electricity Regulations: Topline Report October 2024,* with Environics Research. Available at: https://reclimate.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Re.Climate-Framing-Survey-Topline-Report-Environics-2024.pdf

[7] Törnberg, P., & Chueri, J. (2025). When Do Parties Lie? Misinformation and Radical-Right Populism Across 26 Countries. The International Journal of Press/Politics, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612241311886

Despite this, an increase of dis/misinformation from right-wing populist politicians appears to undermine overall trust in the integrity of information from politicians across the ideological spectrum. Without accountability, it risks normalizing disinformation from political actors.

Journalists in Canada have highlighted a concerning trend of Canadian politicians sharing mis/disinformation about climate change.[8] Recently, Prime Minister Carney was criticized by environmental organizations, activists, and experts like Simon Donner, a climate scientist and co-chair of the Liberal government's Net Zero Advisory Body, for promoting the idea of "decarbonized oil".[9] Oil, a fossil fuel composed of hydrocarbons that releases carbon dioxide when burned in use, cannot be de-carbonized. In this high-profile instance, much of the coverage did appropriately fact-check the idea and correctly identified it as a fossil fuel industry marketing term used to greenwash the Canadian oil sands. The term is used to justify ongoing fossil fuel industry production by suggesting that reducing the emissions intensity of oil production would make it compatible with climate goals. This overlooks the emissions generated when the oil is ultimately burned—roughly 80% of its total climate impact.

Disinformation from the Fossil Fuel Industry

Disinformation and greenwashing from the fossil fuel industry are pervasive. InfluenceMap, a U.K.-based non-profit think tank, reviewed corporate climate advocacy and policy engagement by major companies and industry associations in the fossil fuel value chain during the year following COP28 in Dubai. Their report found over 2,400 instances of anti-energy transition narratives promoted by more than 100 fossil fuel industry players around the world, with the highest concentration in North America.[10]

The United States House Oversight Committee released a joint staff report in April 2024 after a detailed investigation into six major U.S. fossil fuel companies and industry associations' activities. The four companies investigated all have Canadian subsidiaries or hold licenses and interests in extraction in Canada. The Oversight Committee investigation confirmed that oil and gas companies have engaged in decades-long disinformation campaigns to mislead the public and obstruct climate action. Their report notes that "Big Oil's deception campaign evolved from explicit denial of the basic science underlying climate change to deception, disinformation, and doublespeak"[11] on issues including the safety of natural gas and disingenuous industry commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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[8] Michelle Cyca, January 2, 2025. "*Climate misinformation is exploding — and Canadian politicians are spreading it*" in the Narwhal. Available at https://thenarwhal.ca/canada-policitians-climate-misinformation/

[9] Alex Ballingall, June 12, 2025. "Government adviser slams Mark Carney for promoting 'decarbonized' oil pipelines" in the Toronto Star. Available at https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/government-adviser-slams-mark-carney-for-promoting-decarbonized-oil-pipelines/article_71fd48cf-5328-4936-b827-d59faee9a817.html

[10] InfluenceMap (2024). InfluenceMap's Corporate Accountability Platform: Fossil Fuel Misinformation. Available at Tracker https://cop.influencemap.org/NarrativeFactChecker

[11] Ibid. Executive Summary, page 1.

Fossil fuel industry disinformation is used in advertising, public relations, by spokespeople, and pro-fossil fuel narratives are echoed and normalized by partisan-owned media. A recent report by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) and the climate advocacy group For Our Kids also revealed that oil and gas companies have been supplying misleading climate education materials to Canadian Schools.[12]

Beyond the information coming directly from fossil fuel companies, climate mis/disinformation is also spread by pro-fossil fuel "boosters", who have notably targeted municipalities with pro-fossil fuel and anti-climate action campaigns.[13] Without sufficient fact-checking, and Meta's decision to block Canadian news on its platforms, climate mis/disinformation can spread rapidly on social media through organic or paid content, and through networks[14] that embrace anti-climate change ideas as part of a larger ideological or conspiratorial agenda.[15] [16]

Missing Climate Context in Mainstream Media Coverage

The Canadian media landscape has been evolving, but mainstream media continues to play a role in shaping the narratives that influence Canadian opinion. Carleton University's Re.Climate initiative investigated the state of climate change coverage in mainstream media and found that while climate change is being covered, it often lacks context.[17] For example, extreme weather and fires are rarely attributed to climate change, in only 13 per cent of stories. Critically, their research found that only 10 per cent of stories about climate change mention fossil fuels[18] – which are the most significant cause of global warming,[19] and the production of which remains Canada's largest source of climate pollution.[20]

An independent study of media discourse on oil and gas in Canada, commissioned by Environmental Defence Canada, found that in articles covering oil and gas issues, there were nearly three times as many quotes from individuals or companies associated with the fossil fuel industry compared to quotes from individuals or organizations associated with environmental protection or climate advocacy.

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[12] Anne Keary & Jennifer Chesnut (2025). Polluting Education: The Influence of Fossil Fuels on Children's Education in Canada, a report by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment and For Our Kids. Available at: https://www.forourkids.ca/PollutingEducation

[13] Roy White, "Mapping the dark-money oil and gas ads targeting a small Ontario town", *National Observer*, February 24, 2025. Available at https://www.nationalobserver.com/2025/02/24/investigations/dark-money-oil-gas-ads-ontario-thorold-one-persuasion

[14] Nicolas Graham (2024) "Think tanks and climate obstruction: Atlas affiliates in Canada", in Canadian Review of Sociology: https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12467

[15] Marc Fawcett-Atkinson, "An inside look at the plot to make climate denial mainstream", *National Observer*, September 19, 2023. Available at https://www.nationalobserver.com/2023/09/19/news/inside-look-plot-make-climate-denial-mainstream

[16] Geoff Dembicki, "Conservative Party-Linked Facebook Page, Canada Proud, a Major Source of Climate Disinformation" *DeSmog,* March 17, 2022. Available at https://www.desmog.com/2022/03/17/conservative-party-facebook-canada-proud-climate-misinformation/

[17] Hatch, C., Alrasheed, G., Bider, E., Narayanamoorthy, N. (2024). Climate Change and Solutions in Canada's National Media. Re.Climate. Available at: https://reclimate.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Re.Climate-Report-Media-Coverage-2024-v1.pdf

[18] Ibid

[19] United Nations, "Causes and Effects of Climate Change", accessed Sept 9, 2025, at https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/causes-effects-climate-change

[20] Government of Canada, 2025. Greenhouse gas emissions by economic sector, accessed on September 9, 2025, at https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/greenhouse-gas-emissions.html

Frustrated by coverage of energy issues and proposed new fossil fuel infrastructure that platforms fossil fuel advocates while lacking climate context, Sierra Club Canada went so far as to run a mini-campaign encouraging its supporters to contact the CBC editor and ombudsperson requesting that it "adequately covers the critiques of oil and gas expansion both economically and in terms of climate change."[21]

In addition to these challenges in journalistic coverage, oil companies also use paid news media partnerships to protect their social license and perpetuate favourable narratives. Investigative journalists revealed through fossil fuel company documents that major U.S. media companies with large international audiences, like the New York Times, Financial Times, and Reuters, created a wide range of content for the oil and gas industry, including videos, podcasts, sponsored newsletters, advertorials, and events.[22]

Solutions: Tested Approaches to Challenging Misinformation

Efforts to stop the spread of climate mis/disinformation are important, and the same tested approaches can be used whether working on an individual basis, in media, advocacy or government communications. The most effective approach to countering misinformation is "prebunking" or what are sometimes called inoculation strategies, which in essence is public education and awareness raising with factual information about the issues.[23] For example, if people are primed with a basic understanding of climate change, including how coal, oil, and gas are driving the crisis (and must be phased out as rapidly as possible to avert catastrophic ecosystem and social collapse), they are less likely to believe climate misinformation and propaganda.

Media, government, advocacy organizations, and educational institutions have a special responsibility to inoculate the public against misinformation by clearly and consistently delivering the facts on issues that are ripe targets for disinformation.

Debunking mis/disinformation is more challenging because once a misleading narrative or idea is established it is difficult to shift, but efforts to win people over can still be effective. Effective debunking relies heavily on a communicator's perceived credibility and trustworthiness. Debunking has the best results when the audience encounters the correct information with a high frequency, and it's recommended to use a 'sandwich' approach: lead with the fact, warn that a myth is coming and identify the myth, explain why it's a fallacy, and then repeat the fact again.[24]

[21] Sierra Club Canada, 2025. *CBC Energy Coverage is Faulty*. Available at https://www.sierraclub.ca/cbc-energy-coverage-faulty/
[22] Ellen Ormesher & Rebecca John, "Oil Companies Use Paid News Media Partnerships to Protect 'Social Licence to Operate,' Documents Show", *DeSmog,* May 15, 2024. Available at https://www.desmog.com/2024/05/15/oil-companies-use-paid-news-media-partnerships-to-protect-social-licence-to-operate-documents-show/
[23] Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Ecker, U. K. H., Albarracín, D., Amazeen, M. A., Kendeou, P., Lombardi, D., Newman, E. J., Pennycook, G., Porter, E. Rand, D. G., Rapp, D. N., Reifler, J., Roozenbeek, J., Schmid, P., Seifert, C. M., Sinatra, G. M., Swire-Thompson, B., van der Linden, S., Vraga, E. K., Wood, T. J., Zaragoza, M. S. (2020). The Debunking Handbook 2020. Available at https://sks.to/db2020. DOI:10.17910/b7.1182
[24] Ibid

Government Action

Beyond addressing specific instances of mis/disinformation, governments can play a more impactful role in deterring and preventing the spread of climate mis/disinformation. The UN is leading a new international effort for countries to strengthen measures to fight climate change misinformation at climate negotiations, called the *Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change*. Canada has joined this initiative, which is a commitment to investigate, expose and dismantle escalating climate misinformation in step with efforts to do the same across other domestic and international jurisdictions.

Secretary General António Guterres and other UN experts[25], as well as Canadian environmental advocacy groups,[26] have also proposed governments ban promotional advertisements by or about the fossil fuel industry.

In 2024, the Canadian federal government took a step towards addressing greenwashing, one type of environmental disinformation, through the Competition Act's anti-greenwashing rules.[27] Oil and gas companies lobbied against these regulations[28] and expressed their opposition publicly.[29] Prime Minister Carney's government has since repealed two core aspects of the rules. It eliminated the requirement for "internationally recognized methodologies", which sets a reputable standard for environmental credentials; and removed the Third-Party Private Right of Action, making it harder and slower for greenwashing cases to be heard.

Greenwashing laws in other countries provide examples of how Canada's could be strengthened. For example, an Australian legal case required financial settlement and a public apology from EnergyAustralia, which was required to set the record straight about its claim of carbon neutrality via offsetting schemes.[30] While there are financial penalties for cases of greenwashing, companies are not required to publicly acknowledge and issue corrections to the public on misleading information. Beyond climate specific mis/disinformation, governments have additional tools[31] to improve the information ecosystem, including support for legacy media and public journalism.

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[25] Nina Lakhani, "UN expert urges criminalizing fossil fuel disinformation, banning lobbying", *the Guardian,* June 30, 2025. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jun/30/un-expert-urges-criminalizing-fossil-fuel-disinformation-banning-lobbying

[26] Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, *Fossil Fuel Ads Make Us Sick* campaign, accessed Sept 9, 2025. Available at https://www.stopfossilfuelads.ca/

[27] Government of Canada, *Environmental Claims and Greenwashing,* accessed Sept 9, 2025. Available at https://competition-bureau.canada.ca/en/how-we-foster-competition/education-and-outreach/environmental-claims-and-greenwashing

[28] Lobby Registry of Canada, Registration - In-house Organization: Pathways Alliance Inc. Accessed on Sept 9, 2025, included in Lobbying Information>Subject Matter Details: "Communicating about environmental amendments to the Competition Act that resulted from the passage and implementation of former Bill C-59" Available at https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/secure/ocl/lrs/do/vwRg?cno=365074&regId=967985

[29] Lisa Baiton, 2024, *CAPP Statement: Bill C-59 Competition Act Amendments Effectively Muzzles Canadian Businesses*, available at https://www.capp.ca/en/media/capp-statement-bill-c-59-competition-act-amendments-effectively-muzzles-canadian-businesses/

[30] Mitchell Beer, "Australian Anti-Greenwashing Settlement Shows Sharp Contrast with Canada, Critic Says", *the Energy Mix,* May 28, 2025. Available at Australian Anti-Greenwashing Settlement Shows Sharp Contrast with Canada, Critic Says

[31] Sondos Kataite, 2025. *Canada has a disinformation problem—and the tools to fix it.* Available at https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/canada-has-a-disinformation-problem-and-the-tools-to-fix-it/

Media's Role & Resources for Fact Checking

Journalists and news organizations in Canada remain an influential and integral part of the public's information ecosystem. Media can both pre-bunk and debunk climate misinformation, and also provide critical contextual information on stories about climate change, extreme weather, fossil fuels and energy.

It remains an issue that pro-fossil fuel industry narratives are highly normalized, and misleading information from oil and gas companies and industry advocates is regularly repeated without being challenged or contextualized. Below we've highlighted pervasive pro-fossil fuel industry narratives that are often repeated without important contextual information, alongside resources for fact-checking and contextualizing common claims.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
We can't phase out fossil fuels	**Phasing out fossil fuels is possible, and necessary for limiting the worst global warming outcomes**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"Global prosperity will continue to rely on oil and natural gas for decades to come."	The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that demand for coal is peaking, oil will peak within the next four years, and gas will peak around 2035, based on countries' stated policies, and even without additional climate ambition. It should also be noted that all measures of social and economic prosperity will be negatively impacted by climate change caused by burning fossil fuels.
There is "no way wind, solar and battery power could replace" fossil fuels	The Canadian Climate Institute demonstrates that a transition from fossil fuels to clean electricity is feasible and will save Canadians money in energy costs over time.
"As politicians have attended one high-profile conference after another and set ambitious targets for a swift energy transition, global reliance on fossil fuels has only increased"	Clean energy transitions have accelerated sharply in recent years, as demonstrated by the IEA. Recent data from global energy think tank Ember shows that in using fossil fuels for electricity generation began to decline in 2025, and that the clean electricity's global share has risen to 43 per cent.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
We can continue producing fossil fuels and meet our climate goals	**A managed phase-out of oil and gas production is the only way to get to a safe and stable climate.**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"Carney said the federal government wants to see more oil and gas produced, and decarbonized, in Canada"	Climate scientist and former co-chair of Canada's Net Zero Advisory Body has affirmed "There is no such thing as decarbonized oil and gas. Oil contains carbon. It is high school chemistry. And they emit carbon dioxide when they're used." A "grand bargain" energy scenario with continued fossil fuel development in line with what the federal government proposes in their MOU with Alberta, an additional 1 million barrels per day, combined with the use of carbon capture would still emit 89 megatonnes (MT) CO2e annually by 2035, according to calculations by the Pembina Institute. This is clearly not 'decarbonized' oil production.
"Canada's six largest oil sands producers (...) have committed to reach net zero emissions by 2050" "Companies that represent more than 90 per cent of oil sands production are now committed to working together to reach net zero GHG emissions by 2050"	The investments of the six largest companies operating in Canada's oil sands remain overwhelmingly concentrated on oil and gas. The companies have not put forward a plan to reduce emissions in line with net-zero. Their proposed Pathways Alliance project has not reached a point of investment or development certainty, emissions from the sector are increasing, and some companies are expanding production. The claims from the Government of Canada and the Premier of Alberta that the Pathways CCS project will "cancel out" pipeline pollution is mathematically impossible and misleading. Even without a new pipeline, the Pathways Alliance CCS project sequestration by 2030 is expected to only capture 12MT, or 13 % of current oil sands emissions (88.8MT) and just 6 % of total oil and gas emissions (208MT). The oil and gas industry lobbies government officials to oppose policies that would impose regulations on the fossil fuel industry, including regulations to limit emissions from the sector to facilitate reaching net-zero by 2050. Fossil fuel industry CEOs put forward an open letter demanding the rollback of all climate policies that impact the sector in the lead up to the 2025 federal election, and reiterated their demands to Prime Minister Carney and Ministers on two occasions after the election. Fossil fuel lobbyists met with federal government officials 1,135 times in 2024, and 985 times in 2025.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
"By exporting Canadian liquefied natural gas (LNG) and helping Asian and European countries reduce their reliance on coal, Canada can lower net global GHG emissions"	Canadian LNG exports have not resulted in emissions reductions in other jurisdictions, and there is no evidence that LNG exports will displace other fossil fuels, according to research by IISD. LNG may have an environmental footprint 33% higher than coal, when considering processing and shipping, as shown by academics at Cornell University.
The Pathways carbon capture project "would make a huge dent in oil-sands emissions"	Global analysis from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis demonstrated that carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects have been ineffective to date, despite decades of investment, and are often used to produce more oil through Enhanced Oil Recovery. Even at full capacity, Pathways CCS would capture less than half of the emissions generated by a new oil pipeline. Even without a new pipeline, the Pathways Alliance CCS project sequestration by 2030 is expected to only capture 12MT, or 13 % of current oil sands emissions (88.8MT) and just 6 % of total oil and gas emissions (208MT). The Pathways CCS project would cost Canadians at least $16.5 billion, while reducing minimal GHG emissions from the oil sands.

The federal government is hurting Alberta's oil industry	**The federal government has supported the fossil fuel industry**
Sounds like…	Facts…
Climate policies amount to a "deranged vendetta" against Alberta. "Expect the Liberals to target our major industry (oil and gas) and our way of life with their "green" obsession and woke social agendas"	The federal government has consistently supported Alberta's oil industry for years; from supporting the Keystone XL and Trans Mountain Expansion projects, to facilitating the expansion of the oil sands at various points since the 1970s, and through weakening environmental policies. The fossil fuel sector in Canada continues to increase production annually, with record levels set each year since the 2020 pandemic dip. This demonstrates that climate policies and the federal government have not meaningfully hindered or at all limited fossil fuel production.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY

Oil and gas needs more government support to decarbonize	**Fossil fuel companies can afford to reduce their climate pollution**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"the oil and gas production cap, Bill C-69 (also known as "the no more pipelines law") and the tanker ban, all of which have made investment in new oil and gas projects extremely difficult."	The oil and gas sector has sufficient funds to invest in decarbonizing its production. Despite this, the federal government already gives substantial subsidies to fossil fuel companies, including to reduce their emissions. The oil and gas industry in Canada has been making record profits in recent years. Just four top oil and gas companies made a profit of over $10B in 2024. In 2026, the industry is on track to receive $90 billion in profits, which is $60 billion in excess profits that is being added because of the war in Iran and subsequent price spike. The fossil fuel industry has the capital to spend on reducing emissions, but prioritizes paying shareholders while asking the governments to subsidize the adoption of emissions reducing technologies. According to investigations by IISD, government support for "decarbonizing" oil and gas production is a bad investment. It states, "Further support to the sector comes with significant opportunity costs, will slow the energy transition, and entails economic risk, including public liabilities. Public dollars are more effectively spent supporting readily available and proven low-carbon technologies."

Canadian fossil fuels are comparatively better, or Canadians are more entitled to produce fossil fuels	**Canadian oil is expensive to produce and very polluting**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"As long as the world needs oil and gas it should be Canadian"	Canada is very unlikely to sell the last barrel of oil as long-term demand declines due to its production cost, according to analysis from IISD. There is no evidence that Canada's ESG record would protect Canada's market share.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
"Canada consistently ranks high amongst the top oil and natural gas producers on several global indices, showing our leadership in social progress, freedom, democracy, and other categories that make our country an ideal energy supplier of choice." "Let's not forget that oil and natural gas from Canada is produced to the highest environmental and human rights standards in the world"	The Canadian oil and gas industry is not environmentally and socially friendly. It is the largest contributor to Canada's emissions. The vast majority of oil produced by Canada is tar sands heavy crude, which is highly polluting. It creates toxic tailings ponds, which have been growing for more than 50 years without a solution and have negative health impacts for communities in the region. Leaks occur, such as the 5.3 million litres of toxic wastewater that Imperial Oil spilled in 2023, and disproportionately harm nearby Indigenous communities. Research published in the journal *Science* found that tar sands operations are releasing air pollution at levels 20 to 64 times higher than reported. While the emissions intensity from tar sands has declined over the years, Oil Sands Synthetic Crude is still reported as the highest carbon intensity among the major global blends, and emissions from the sector are rising. A 2023 report by the U.S. National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) found that the emissions intensity of Canadian production was nearly three times more than the World Average (see table in *Exhibit 30*) with Canada reported at 77.2 kg CO2e per Barrel of Oil. Even with improvements being reported by the industry (0.399 mt CO2 per cubic meter is roughly equivalent to 63.44 kg CO2/bbl), Canadian oil is still six times the emissions intensity of Saudi Arabia's lighter crude types, for example. Note, there are varying degrees of specificity used to calculate emissions intensity, which can lead to some discrepancies in the resulting numbers depending on the method used. An interactive example from the Rocky Mountain Institute is available here.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
First Nations ownership of fossil fuel projects is "the best vision of reconciliation" "world-leading climate performance and Indigenous reconciliation are built into the DNA of Ksi Lisims LNG" "Working collaboratively with Indigenous communities and businesses, the oil and natural gas industry can support economic reconciliation and prosperity for generations to come"	Indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for resource extraction and economic development activities on their lands and territories, as well as other rights outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendation for businesses (#92) calls on the corporate sector to adopt UNDRIP and FPIC, as well as equitable access to jobs, training and education, and for corporations to offer education on Indigenous history and rights. The fossil fuel industry has instead promoted the idea of "economic reconciliation", a move which has been criticised by Indigenous Climate Action and others. It is deployed by industry to create a false narrative that opposition to fossil fuel projects is tantamount to opposing Indigenous self determination. During the Canadian government's Economic Reconciliation Roundtable in 2024, the number one priority expressed by participants was the need for further investments in infrastructure in Indigenous communities. Climate action, as well as ownership opportunities and self-determination about national resource projects, were also identified. Several fossil fuel projects branded as forwarding economic reconciliation are opposed by multiple Indigenous groups, including Ksi Lisims and the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
Canada needs the fossil fuel industry to thrive	**Canada can thrive while transitioning away from fossil fuels**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"Canada's energy sector is a cornerstone of the national economy" "Energy plays an outsized role in our economy, directly accounting for one-tenth of GDP and supplying roughly a quarter of the country's merchandise exports."	The sector reported contributing 3 per cent of GDP in 2025. International oil markets are volatile and subject to geopolitical pressures. Oil demand will peak within five years. The Canadian fossil fuel industry could face $100B in stranded assets as early as 2036. Investing in Canadian renewable energy is a more reliable and affordable choice for energy security, with many long-term and global economic benefits. More information available here.
"when we talk about the industry's contributions to the economy, we're talking about more than just numbers. We're talking about art galleries and museums, hospitals and high schools, and the roads and bridges that connect communities"	The fossil fuel industry creates immense privatized wealth, and the many costs associated with the industry and its activities are paid for by the public. For example, the federal government's analysis of the social cost of carbon prices 2023 carbon dioxide emissions at $261 per tonne, the year for which we have the most recent emissions records. At that price, the emissions from the oil and gas sector in 2023 cost society $54.28 billion dollars. In 2024 the federal government alone provided nearly $30B in direct subsidies and public financing to oil and gas companies and projects. This is money that could be spent directly on paying for social infrastructure. The fossil fuel industry leverages their investments in communities and cultural infrastructure, like museums, hospitals, and schools, for social license. Fossil fuel company records demonstrate they understand this type of investment as a strategic business decision that can be used to block climate action and protect fossil fuel extraction companies from criticism.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
"the oil and gas sector also plays an oversized role here at home, supporting over 900,000 jobs"	Fossil fuel industries constitute a small proportion of direct employment in Canada, under 1% of all jobs. The oil and gas sector employed 177,000 people in Canada in 2024. That is actually fewer than almost every other sector or industry in the Canadian economy. Employment in the sector has been declining since 2015. As companies have made efforts to reduce workers, the number of jobs per barrel of oil produced in Canada have dropped 43% between 2012-2023.
"From the moment we come out of our mother's body, fossil fuels make our lives better. From cradle to grave, our lives are intertwined with fossil fuels"	While fossil fuel products are ubiquitous, they are connected to many adverse health impacts. Microplastics are tied to a litany of health issues, while fossil fuel air pollution is responsible for 1 in 5 deaths globally.
"Right now, we sell our oil at a discount because we have access to only one market. But there is both a domestic and a global need for our energy resources."	A new pipeline would have a remarkably large price tag, take over a decade to build, and likely would not have a market. There are limited options for other importers with the capacity to refine Canadian heavy crude. The most viable current market is China, which is rapidly electrifying and where demand is expected to peak in 2027. India, one of the other potential importers for Canadian fossil fuels, may provide near term demand but its energy transition is progressing quickly. Recent analysis demonstrates that low cost solar and batteries are enabling India to continue economic development without the long fossil detour taken by the West and China. In India, the majority of fossil fuels are consumed in power generation. Solar adoption in India is in an accelerating growth phase and fossil generation declined by 34 TWh (-3.3%) in 2025, because of record growth in renewables. The low-quality of Canadian heavy crude and these limited refinery options account for the decreased value, more so than domestic climate policy or federal regulations.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
Fossil fuels are integral to Canadian identity and sovereignty	**Canada's identity and sovereignty is not inherently tied to fossil fuels**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"the federal government must embrace the oil industry as an essential aspect of national identity" Trump has "created new arguments for building a pipeline — including economic sovereignty and trade diversification" "Every year that passes without another pipeline, Canada will be failing to build meaningful buffers against U.S. tariffs."	The oil and gas sector employed 177,000 people in Canada in 2024. That is actually fewer than almost every other sector or industry in the Canadian economy. Employment in the sector has been declining since 2015. There is no inherent tie between Canadian identity and fossil fuels. There has been a concerted effort to cultivate this narrative and public perception through branding and marketing campaigns like "I <3 Canadian Oil" by Canada Action, which received funding from fossil fuel companies. More than 70% of oil sands production in Canada is owned by foreign shareholders, mostly from the United States. Building a new pipeline is unlikely to protect Canada against Trump's tariffs. The vast majority of Canada's oil goes to the US. Canada's second largest market for exported crude oil is China, which imports comparably small amounts. Other countries are unlikely to buy heavy crude from a new pipeline as they do not have the required refining capacity. Global demand is on the cusp of structural decline.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
Renewable energy, electric vehicles, and other energy transition technology can't/won't replace fossil fuels	**The energy transition is already unfolding. Reliable and affordable renewable electricity generation, clean technologies and energy efficiency improvements, are already displacing fossil fuels**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"Renewables have a place in our energy mix but the fact remains that they are intermittent and unreliable"	A clean electricity grid has an energy mix with different features and management than fossil fuel powered grids, but it is entirely possible to have a clean and reliable electricity grid. The main challenge is making a smooth transition from fossil fuel based systems to a clean grid, which requires investment in infrastructure upgrades. The large-scale transition of the system's energy mix should also be coordinated by the grid operator to maintain stability and fair costs. Wind and solar *are* intermittent, but the solution is to combine these renewables with another flexible clean energy source, like a hydroelectric dam, or energy storage, where output can be controlled. Both geothermal and hydro can be either baseload or flexible (also called dispatchable) power. Energy storage, like batteries and pumped storage, can capture the electricity being generated by intermittent renewables when they're most active and hold it in a different form to dispatch on the grid on demand. For context, coal and nuclear are inflexible baseload power sources that take a long time to ramp up or down. In some cases gas is dispatched as baseload, but it can play the role of flexible energy supply that is actively managed to align with demand. In fact, increasing renewable energy capacity can bolster grid reliability, including after extreme weather events. Many jurisdictions around the world have implemented distributed energy resources that facilitate decarbonization and improve grid reliability. It is also worth noting that the primary cause of power outages is extreme weather, which is occurring more frequently because of climate change caused by emissions from burning fossil fuels.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
"EVs just aren't practical (yet) for a country this big and this cold" "EVs don't provide meaningful environmental benefits" "Electric cars simply aren't the right option for millions of Canadians"	EVs are reliable and safe. EVs do have an environmental cost, but it is much lower than that of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. They have 89% lower life-cycle emissions when compared to ICE vehicles, and the technology continues to advance quickly. The average range for an EV sold in the United States is 300 miles. Most EV owners are happy with their vehicle despite the need for more infrastructure. More info available here.
"heat pumps don't work here"	Heat pumps are efficient and reduce emissions from the building sector, which represented 12% of Canada's emissions in 2023. They are also the lowest-cost option for home heating in Canada. Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pump (CC-ASHP) technology is specifically designed for northern climates, with the newest prototypes heating down to −31 °C. Heat pump technology is continuing to improve substantially.
"wind and solar power are constantly depicted as desirable "energy alternatives" to fossil fuels, but many Albertans and Canadians are unaware of their environmental impacts" Renewable energy does not scale up easily, it is inherently intermittent, and its environmental impact includes using up large tracts of land, extensive mining and piling up hazardous waste in the form of used solar panels, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.	The waste created by solar is still miniscule compared to that created by the fossil fuel industry, and advances are being made in recycling. There are real environmental, mining and land use concerns with green technologies like solar and EV batteries. Solar panels are not covering significant farmland, and there are many ways to avoid this, including using agrivoltaics. There is overwhelming evidence that lifecycle emissions from solar and wind energy are far lower than those of all fossil fuels. All the materials needed to reach net zero by 2050 will be less than the amount of coal consumed in a year, according to a 2023 report from the Energy Transitions Commission. A report from the Rocky Mountain Institute predicts that no new mining for battery materials will be required by 2050, because extracted materials can and will be recycled consistently.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
Canada isn't one of the biggest polluters, so what we do doesn't matter	**Canada's climate pollution has an impact**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"The Canadian government's own figures show that Canada is only responsible for 1.5 per cent of global emissions, whereas China produces more than a quarter of the world's greenhouse gasses"	Canada has extremely high historical emissions, accounting for 2.21% of the global historic total. Canadians have some of the highest emissions per capita averaging 31.05 tonnes per capita for historical emissions, and 13.44 tonnes per capita in 2022, the most recent year reported. Canada is not contributing its fair share to emissions reductions. China is currently the world's largest emitter. To make direct comparisons to the Canadian metrics provided above, its total historical emissions contribution is 12.9%, but only 4 tonnes per capita for total historical emissions. China's current average is 7.515 tCO2 per year in 2022, less than the Canadian average. It is integral for global climate stability that China reduces its emissions. It also has a strong economic incentive to decarbonize quickly. To this end, China has shown leadership in the deployment of energy transition technologies, from electric vehicles to solar panels, for both domestic use and global supply chains. The energy transition in China is happening extremely quickly. In the first half of 2025, China's new solar installations reached 256 GW, more than doubled compared with the same period last year. As a result, China added more than twice as much solar capacity as the rest of the world combined, making up 67% of the global total. Domestic emissions appear to have peaked in 2024 and are showing a flat line or generally falling trend. As China exports its low-cost energy transition technologies it is facilitating more rapid energy transitions elsewhere. Cheap Chinese tech has enabled 25% of emerging markets to leapfrog the US in end-use electrification and 63% have leapfrogged it on solar generation share.

MISLEADING NARRATIVES	REALITY
The public supports expanding fossil fuel infrastructure	**The public cares about climate action, and favours renewable energy over fossil fuel infrastructure**
Sounds like…	Facts…
"Three-quarters of Canadians support building a new oil pipeline"	Polls do show that support for a new oil pipeline has recently increased, in the context of economic pressure from U.S. tariffs. It also remains true that the majority of Canadians are concerned about the climate crisis, and want the government to prioritize the development of renewable energy. Polling commissioned in 2025 by Clean Energy Canada found that 67% of respondents favour clean energy projects over "conventional" fossil fuel development, with 85% want the federal government to maintain or increase climate action. Polling commissioned by Environmental Defence in 2024 produced similar results, and also found that 53% of respondents want governments to phase out the use and production of fossil fuels.