

Ottawa Journal: Responsibility developing resources, protecting the environment

For many Canadians and for our Government, the economy remains the top priority. Yet we don't want economic growth to come at an environmental cost. This is why our Government is promoting responsible development of Canada's natural resources ? creating good new jobs, while enhancing environmental protection.

Canada is fortunate to be blessed with abundant natural resources. There's tidal power in Atlantic Canada, hydro-electric dams in Quebec, the mineral-rich Ring of Fire in Ontario, and the oil sands in Alberta. Prudently developing these resources is vital to creating jobs now and to keeping Canada on track for long-term economic prosperity.

As a trading nation, Canada is a reliable and secure energy supplier for our friends and partners. Expanding international trade and opening markets in Europe, around the Pacific Rim and throughout the world is a key part of our Government's economic plan.

Mining workers and communities can also count on the support of our Government. As Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources, has said, "Mining continues to be a cornerstone of the Canadian economy." Approximately 330,000 Canadian jobs depend directly on mining, a growing industry supported by the Mineral Exploration Tax Credit under Economic Action Plan 2013. Overall, resource industries create almost 800,000 Canadian jobs.

At the same time, our Government continues to protect Canada's enviable natural heritage. We've strengthened fines for pollution and environmental damage and are enshrining in law the "polluter pays" principle. We're also requiring that companies make public and transparent their emergency and environmental plans. For oil production and transportation we have increased inspections of gas and oil pipelines, doubled the comprehensive audits of pipelines and required new safety measures for oil tankers. In addition, the governments of Canada and Alberta have established a joint program to closely monitor air and water quality and biodiversity near oil sands.

Canadians can count on our Government to ensure that our environmental protection is the strongest in the world, while responsibly developing resources and supporting job creation. The economy remains our top priority and through our Economic Action Plan we are helping keep Canada on track for long-term prosperity.

By David Tilson, M.P.