



**Laureates:**

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)  
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)  
Jody Williams, USA (1997)  
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)  
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)  
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

**Nobel Women's Initiative presentation to  
Ontario Energy Board Hearing on Energy East Proposed Pipeline  
April 7, 2014 in Stittsville, ON  
Delivered by Elizabeth Bernstein, Executive Director**

Video screened first: VIDEO from October 2013 (Produced by Nobel Women's Initiative & Ecology Ottawa)

Nobel Prize Winner Visits Proposed Energy East Pipeline in Ottawa:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTBfCPrACns>

Communities across North America are coming together to oppose the expansion of the Alberta tar sands and the pipelines meant to move the highly toxic bitumen to ports on the East and West coasts, as well as towards the US and Gulf of Mexico. Women have been at the forefront of this struggle. The Nobel Women's Initiative would like to present some of the concerns that we have heard from women to Ontario's leaders.

As you just saw, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jody Williams, Chair of the Initiative, led a fact-finding mission to the Alberta tar sands and along the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline in October 2012. During the mission, the delegation met with over 200 women from 13 communities.

Women, children and communities directly affected by the tar sands development are dealing with a range of economic, health and social impacts, including homelessness, spiraling inflation, respiratory diseases, contaminated water, high levels of cancer rates and increased domestic violence. The economic boom for so many in northern Alberta has had a dark side for many women. Affordable housing and shelter spaces are scarce in the area, while many communities report high levels of domestic violence.

Equally disturbing are the reports from the communities downstream from the tar sands. One woman in Fort McKay told us: "I've lost my mother to cancer. I've lost my dad to cancer. I know seven people who have died from cancer. I have been diagnosed with cancer and two weeks ago my sister was diagnosed as well." At one point the community had to import bottled water for five consecutive months because their local water supply was contaminated with industry pollutants.

*Advocating for peace, justice and equality*

Women we met along the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline fear oil spills. Pipelines endanger people, farms, wildlife and water supplies. Shipping the world's dirtiest oil will never be safe, no matter if it's by pipeline or rail. In Alberta alone, an average of three hundred oil pipeline spills happen every year and the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, is just one example of many where communities were put at risk due to crude oil shipping.

Upon the announcement of the proposed Energy East pipeline, Jody Williams came to Ottawa to hear from women. First and foremost, women are concerned about the safety of the existing pipeline doubting its ability carry bitumen safely. Ottawa women lack trust in TransCanada's capacity to respond to an oil spill and are not confident in TransCanada's commitment to pipeline safety. The women are concerned about the impacts a pipeline spill would have on their water supply, given that Energy East would run under the Rideau River—Ottawa residents' water supply. Women are further concerned about TransCanada's marketing campaigns that often contain false information contributing to their mistrust of the company.

We also heard from women about the impacts of speaking out about the tar sands and related pipeline projects. Disturbingly, pressures to develop the tar sands are undermining democracy in Canada. Women report being under high levels of pressure from government, industry and even other community members to not speak publicly against tar sands development. Several women found themselves excluded from environmental hearings, labeled 'radicals' and in some cases were singled out by police and government officials. For example, Saik'uz First Nation Chief Jackie Thomas found herself under surveillance by the RCMP as a result of her work with the Yinka Dene Alliance.

Women are concerned that space for debate and open discussion about the impacts of tar sands development is quickly eroding. The government's own scientists have been silenced in reporting harmful consequences of tar sands development while the government has been actively dismantling environmental laws and cancelling research and monitoring programs that deal with climate change and the environmental and health effects of resource development.

Despite all attempts to muzzle their voices, women are organizing for change and their message is clear: women are demanding a shift away from the dependence on climate changing fuels and towards a future built on safe, clean and renewable energy.

Women we met realize that Energy East is not an isolated project, but that new pipelines mean further reckless expansion of the tar sands. They know the Alberta tar sands are already the most carbon intensive project on the planet. They know that climate change brings more natural disasters, more famine and drought, more

resource scarcity and ultimately more human displacement and conflict, which again disproportionately impacts women as they bear the brunt of poverty. They know that the impacts are already being felt in Canada and will only increase, yet it is the world's most vulnerable who are already paying with their lives and livelihoods. We know that it is impossible for Canada to do its fair share to fight climate change and allow the tar sands to expand as projected.

We applaud the government of Ontario for recently shutting down its coal power plants and enacting the Green Energy Act. TransCanada's proposed Energy East would undo the good done by these unprecedented policies.

The Government of Ontario has a responsibility to consider these broader impacts and decide whether it wants to be complicit in such failure or demand a more balanced and sane energy strategy for Ontario and Canada.

We urge Ontario to say no to the proposed Energy East pipeline and instead invest in renewable energy infrastructure, to be on the right side of history in moving beyond dirty oil.

Thank you.

*The Nobel Women's Initiative uses the prestige of the Nobel Peace Prize and six courageous women peace laureates to magnify the power and visibility of women's groups working in countries around the world for peace, justice and equality.*

