

Why Californians are worried about the Trans Mountain pipeline

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Oilsands exports are headed to the Bay Area, where protests are already gearing up

Posts by James Wilt"

Canadians might imagine Burnaby as the main site of protest against the Trans Mountain oil pipeline and tanker project, the Vancouver suburb marked as it is by dozens of peaceful demonstrations, arrests and [in recent years](#).

[But a new line of opposition is now being drawn on sandy beaches some 1,300 kilometres to the south — in the Bay Area of California. There, residents are increasingly concerned that the expansion of Trans Mountain may result in a major uptick in tankers carrying Alberta oilsands crude to the region's five refineries, which comes with increased risks of spills, local air pollution, refinery accidents and a locking in of fossil fuel usage for decades to come.](#)

[Communities have specifically identified the proposed reconfiguration of the Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery](#) near San Francisco to process more oilsands crude as a sign of things to come — and are already fighting back.

Contrary to the claims often made by government and industry, expanded oilsands production is [far more likely to go to California than Asia](#) : the state is much closer in proximity, sports the specialized refining capacity to process heavy oil and needs new imports to make up for dwindling domestic production.