



JUN 18 2009

Advanced Aboriginal Water Treatment Team
Safe Drinking Water Foundation
912 Idylwyld Drive North, Suite 1
Saskatoon SK S7L 0Z6

Dear Members:

The Honourable Jim Prentice has asked me to respond to your letter of December 10, 2008, concerning oil sands development and safe drinking water.

The Government of Canada continues to work with the Government of Alberta on initiatives such as the Cumulative Environmental Management Association and the Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program. Environment Canada also participates in the environmental assessment review process for various oil sands developments.

Environment Canada's concerns with oil sands and associated development include the regional cumulative effects on air quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, water quality, and hydrology issues. The Department works to ensure that any new or expanded facility meets the requirements and regulations of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Fisheries Act* (section 36 – water pollution prevention provisions), and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*.

Environment Canada also continues to work with Alberta Environment and other regional stakeholders to consider alternative approaches for cumulative effects assessment in the lower Athabasca River watershed. To this end, Environment Canada supports the implementation of the provincially led Regional Sustainable Development Strategy for the Athabasca Oil Sands Area. In addition to providing resources, Environment Canada participates in three Cumulative Environmental Management Association technical working groups in order to provide expertise and focus efforts on the resolution of the highest priority issues.

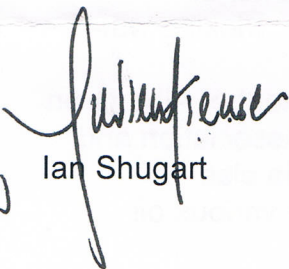
Addressing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality are major priorities for our government. In the November 2008 Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to reducing Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020. The goal will be met while also ensuring that Canada's actions going forward remain comparable to those undertaken by

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our partners in the United States, Europe and other industrialized countries. The Government of Canada will work with the provincial governments and our partners to develop and implement a North American cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gases and an effective international protocol on reducing greenhouse gases for the post-2012 period.

I trust that the foregoing is of assistance, and extend my best regards.

Sincerely,


for Ian Shugart