



## **Water Restrictions lifted on the Athabasca River, while water levels remain dangerously low**

For Immediate Release:  
Location: Athabasca River

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the Alberta Government announced a water restriction was in place on the Athabasca River, which restricted all tar sands operators on the Athabasca River to temporarily stop withdrawing water, except the 3 'grandfathered' companies; Shell, Suncor and Syncrude.

On September 16, 2015 the Alberta Government then announced that the temporary water restriction was lifted.

Since the water restriction, 4 reports have come to attention, all providing mounting evidence that low water levels in the Athabasca River are going to continue to be expected as long as there is massive tar sands industry drawing water from the Athabasca River.

Some of the reports date back as far as 2007;  
4 reports providing mounting evidence that the Athabasca River levels are dropping;

1)2007 report by Dr.David Schindler; 'Running out of Steam'

2)2010 report by Firelight group for the community of Fort Chipewyan; 'As Long as the River Flows'

3)2015 report by Dr.Simon Donner; 'Climate Change impacts on stream flow availability for the Athabasca Oil sands.'

4)2015 report by Dr.David Sauchyn; 'Long Term reliability of the Athabasca River as the water source for oil sands mining.'

There are historical droughts, lasting long periods of time, dating back 900 years. Back then people could survive, but today, the Oil sands industry has, in some cases, unlimited access to water in the Athabasca River, giving companies first rights to water, over long standing indigenous treaties or any other recognized water licences holders. This is clearly a human rights issue.

There are still reports coming into the Keepers of the Athabasca that the Athabasca River is still extremely low.

Why has the water restriction been lifted? At a time when communities downstream depend on healthy water levels for fall harvesting, and daily use, such as drinking water?

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