

Dirty Fuels Fact Sheet

Scraping the bottom of the barrel for America's dirtiest fuels.

High gas prices are driving the search for cheaper alternatives, but energy companies and some in Congress are focusing their attention on dirty unconventional oil sources. Many see sources like tar sands, oil shale, and liquid coal as the solution to high gas prices and our dependence on foreign oil. These dirty fuels are risky investments that create more global warming pollution, put our communities at risk and will do nothing to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels.

Dirty, High-Risk Fuels

Dirty fuels from tar sands oil, oil shale, and liquid coal are risky investments that take us down the wrong energy path. These fuels exacerbate existing environmental problems, like water shortages and global warming. Requiring tremendous amounts of energy and water to produce, these fuels are too costly and divert our attention for cheaper, faster, and cleaner solutions.

It takes more than one quarter of a barrel of oil to produce one barrel of tar sands oil. Recent research suggests that tar sands oil also creates 15-40% more lifecycle global warming pollution as conventional oil because of all the energy it takes to mine, upgrade, and refine the fuel. Continuing to develop this dirty fuel will make it much more difficult to address climate change.

The oil shale found in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming have also attracted substantial attention. Like tar sands, converting shale to oil requires tremendous energy and water. Producing one million barrels per day would require a new network of dirty coal plants and would use three million barrels of water per year in a region already facing water shortages.



Tar sands mining in Alberta destroys Canada's boreal forests--an important wildlife habitat for migratory birds and other species. Water and air pollution from tar sands mining also destroy wildlife habitat, putting animals and local residents at risk.

Liquid coal from Appalachia's seem like another option in our quest for cheap fuel. The coal industry estimates that reducing oil imports by 11% would require a 40% increase coal production. But communities and ecosystems in the Appalachian mountains cannot withstand more Mountaintop Removal, the preferred method for coal mining in this region.

Americans deserve real, clean energy solutions!

Clean Energy Solutions

Investing in dirty fuels will increase our risk from global warming. The Southeast already faces nearly 7-23 inches of sea level rise, loss of diverse plant and animal species, and increased drought conditions. Instead of developing fuels that increase global warming, we need to develop short-term solutions to rising energy costs and fuels that will help us address soaring prices in the near-term and solve global warming in the long-term. Dirty fuels like tar sands, oil shale, and liquid coal won't do either. But there are plenty of solutions that will.



Top: New plug-in hybrid vehicles can reach more than 100 miles per gallon. Below: Southeastern fields offer sustainable fuel sources.

We *can* meet our fuel needs without increasing global warming pollution.

- Americans use 390 million gallons of gasoline every day. By increasing automobile efficiency, we can reduce the amount of gasoline we need. Raising fuel economy standards to 35 mpg by 2015 and 50 mpg by 2030 would allow us to save nearly 20 billion barrels of oil by 2030.
- In South Carolina, Michelin and Clemson University have teamed up to design new tires that decrease rolling resistance and provide better fuel economy. New innovative research can help us decrease our dependence on oil.
- The Southeast is home to a variety of land-grant universities and private institutions that are accelerating research on sustainable biofuels from sources like switchgrass and forestry waste products.
- Visit our website: www.cleanenergy.org to learn more about clean energy solutions.

**For more information contact Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
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