

Should New Pipelines Be Built in Canada?

Discussion Prompt

No new pipelines should be built in Canada.

General background

The oil industry is a significant part of Canada's economy, accounting for 11% of our GDP and requiring 740,000 jobs. This industry relies on a system of pipelines to transport oil and gas from the place of extraction to where it can be refined and consumed.

The first Canadian pipeline was built in the mid-1800s, but it took another hundred years for an oil and gas boom in Alberta to create the need for a rapid expansion of distribution networks. The second half of the 20th century saw the development of numerous major pipeline projects.

Today more than 840,000 km of pipelines criss-cross the country, bringing oil and gas to Canadian homes, as well as to international markets.

In recent years, the construction of new pipelines has become controversial along with growing awareness of the relationship between fossil fuels and climate change.

Proposed pipeline projects in Canada have faced strong opposition from members of the public, Indigenous groups, and local governments expressing concern over climate and potential environmental impacts.

For More Information:

- [Pipelines in Canada](#) | The Canadian Encyclopedia
- [Everything You Need To Know About Pipelines—And Why They're So Controversial](#) | Chatelaine

Yes

*Here are some of the reasons why people might argue that **new pipelines should not be built** in Canada.*

Climate change

Burning fossil fuels is a major contributor to climate change. There is a growing consensus around the need to transition to cleaner energy sources as soon as possible. Investing in

pipelines represents commitment to a carbon-emitting form of energy we should be moving away from.

Environmental concerns

Pipelines pose a significant risk to the environment. Oil spills are not uncommon and can contaminate water sources and harm wildlife, leading to long-term environmental damage.

Indigenous rights

Many of Canada's proposed pipeline projects cross Indigenous lands, raising concerns about the impact on traditional territories, cultural practices, and rights. For example, the Wet'suwet'en Nation's hereditary chiefs have fought the proposed Coastal GasLink Pipeline in British Columbia, which was the subject of protests and blockades in 2020.

Cost

Some argue that investing in oil pipelines is not economically viable in the long term, given the global shift toward renewable energy sources and decreasing demand for oil. When the Canadian government purchased the TransMountain Pipeline in 2018 for 4.5 billion dollars, the move was condemned by many and the project's cost has since increased to \$30.9 billion.

Public Safety

Pipelines have been known to leak or rupture. Pipeline accidents can release toxic and flammable substances into the air and water, putting nearby communities at risk.

Read More:

- [How Indigenous pipeline resistance keeps emissions in the ground](#) | CBC
- [Huge expansion of oil pipelines endangering climate, says report | Oil](#) | The Guardian
- [Everything you need to know about the tar sands and how they impact you](#) | Greenpeace Canada
- [Cost of Trans Mountain expansion pipeline keeps climbing, now \\$30.9B](#) | CBC

No

*Here are some of the reasons why people might argue that **new pipelines should be built** in Canada.*

Economic benefits

Pipelines can create jobs and provide economic benefits to the communities where they are built. Pipeline construction and operation creates employment in engineering, construction, and transportation industries. In addition, pipelines can generate revenue for governments through taxes and royalties, which can be used to fund public services and infrastructure projects.

Energy security

Pipelines can help to ensure Canadians have access to a reliable and secure supply of energy. By transporting oil and gas from production sites to refineries and export facilities, pipelines can help to reduce reliance on foreign sources of energy and mitigate the risk of supply disruptions.

Environmental benefits

Pipelines can be a more environmentally friendly means of transporting oil and gas than methods such as rail or truck. They have a lower carbon footprint than these alternatives, as they emit fewer greenhouse gasses. They also have a lower risk of spills and accidents.

Industry competitiveness

Canada is a significant producer of oil and gas, and pipelines can help to ensure that these resources can be transported to export markets in a cost-effective manner. By enabling Canadian oil and gas to reach global markets, pipelines can help to maintain the competitiveness of the industry.

Indigenous partnerships

Pipeline projects can involve partnerships with Indigenous communities, providing them with economic benefits and opportunities. Partnerships can also help to ensure that Indigenous peoples have a say in pipeline development and operation, and that their rights and interests are respected. For example, the proposed Coastal GasLink Pipeline in British Columbia has agreements with all 20 elected First Nations along the route.

Read More:

- [Pipelines Across Canada](#) | Government of Canada
- [The world needs more Canadian oil and gas](#) | The Globe and Mail
- [Canada must come together and build more pipelines to lift economy out of COVID-19 hole](#) | CBC