



Energy in Canada @ 150 and Beyond Canada – Responsible Energy for the Globe

By Steve Williams, President & CEO, Suncor Energy

One in a series of papers prepared by Canadian energy sector leaders – at the invitation of the Energy Council of Canada – exploring key aspects of our ongoing national energy story on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Summary: Steve Williams says Canadians need to end the current polarization in the debate on energy, and instead seize the opportunity presented by a national character that tends towards common understanding and inclusive approaches.

Resources and energy have been defining elements of Canada's history. The 150th anniversary of our country's Confederation provides us a unique opportunity to think about where we've been, but more importantly, where we're headed.

For us in Canada, and indeed for many around the world, energy use is synonymous with the quality of life we enjoy. Energy delivers much of our well-being and high quality of life, including heating our homes, enabling transportation and commerce, and powering manufacturing. Energy also plays a vital role in our economy, contributing about \$130 billion dollars to our Gross Domestic Product, shaping our industrial and service sectors, and positioning Canada as a strong trading nation. It directly or indirectly employs 640,000 Canadians from coast to coast.

As Canadians, we've come to appreciate energy's economic contributions, but we can't ignore that energy development and use happen in a

broader societal context – shaped by environmental and social considerations which are just as important.

Unfortunately, much of the public discourse on energy in this context has devolved into a polarized debate. We've seen how energy conversations have become us/them propositions, how environment is pitted against economy, how the status quo is being defended against an entirely new way of delivering energy, and how social considerations can sometimes be pushed aside.

These intense conversations – if we can call them that – aren't working.

Through the debates, we're coming to a realization that these intense conversations, if we can call them that, aren't working. The polarization is not productive and there's a risk that it may hold up progress for decades. There has to be a better way. It's time for leadership in achieving a positive energy future for Canada – one which is progressive, yet practical.

The good news is that there isn't a nation on the globe whose natural character is better suited to build common understanding and commitment



to achieving a bright energy future than Canada. Canadians tend to look forward, are inspired about what's possible, and readily embrace inclusive approaches. It's as much a part of our DNA as hockey and maple syrup, which bodes well for the years ahead.

Innovation and technology will be key levers as we make our way towards a low carbon energy future, both here and around the world. The Canadian oil and gas sector is investing over \$1.3 billion annually in research and development, leading to improved environmental performance, resource efficiencies, and cost competitiveness. And there's more to come. From 2010 to 2015, the number of patents related to the oil and gas industry more than doubled. And the oil and gas sector investment in research and development in 2015 grew by 1,400 per cent percent from 2009 – leading R&D investment in the country.

[The Energy Futures Lab proposes building an energy system that contributes to reconciliation.](#)

As a global environmental leader, Canada can export both our technologies and low carbon-intensity products worldwide, thereby doing our part to address global climate change. By not only reducing our own emissions through the introduction of renewable energy and development of low-carbon intensity fuels, Canada can use our experience, technology and innovations to assist other countries in meeting their own targets.

Our focus on innovation should not be just about technical expertise – it's about embracing new ways of doing things when it comes to environment and community. We need to be open to innovative approaches to how we relate to and interact with one another, how we engage the public, how we develop policy, and

so on. We have to be willing to each embrace the role and responsibility we have to contribute to solutions, and to change our behavior in a way that helps to address complex challenges such as climate change.

The Energy Futures Lab, which Suncor is proud to support, proposes building an energy system that contributes to reconciliation between Canada's indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and is inclusive, accessible, and equitable to current and future generations. At Suncor, we've committed to being part of that journey, through a social goal aimed at changing the way we think and act towards Aboriginal Peoples.

Achieving our vision for Canada's energy future will also require innovative approaches when it comes to public policy development. As we design energy systems and grapple with the challenge of climate change, we need to bring together diverse perspectives, and then be willing to take collective action. Canada needs to embrace a global vision of an energy future that is progressive, yet practical. Coming from a place of leadership in Alberta and Canada, we can ensure that we have a place at the global table to influence action on the global challenge of climate change.

It can mean a step into an uncertain world, but the alternative of standing on the sidelines and waiting for the perfect answer isn't the way. We all want the same things – a prosperous economy, a healthy environment and vibrant communities. Those can pull us together, and inspire us to offer the best ideas for a positive energy future.

If you ask citizens around the world where they'd like their energy to come from, they often say they'd prefer it to come from Canada, more than any other place in the world. That should serve as inspiration – helping us create an energy future that is the envy of the globe.



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Given our bountiful resources, our track record of innovation, and Canadians' willingness to engage with others to overcome differences and reach solutions, I'm optimistic in what lies ahead for Canada and our energy future. O Canada, indeed.

Steve Williams began his career with Suncor in May 2002 as Executive Vice President, Corporate Development and Chief Financial Officer. He then served as Executive Vice President, Oil Sands and Chief Operating Officer. Steve has more than 40 years of international energy industry experience, including 18 years at Esso/Exxon. He holds a Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in chemical engineering from Exeter University and is a fellow of the Institution of Chemical Engineers. He is a graduate of the business economics program at Oxford University as well as the advanced management program at the Harvard Business School.