

Impending British Parliament Vote on EU-Canada CETA Trade Deal Which Forced Tar Sands on Europe

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EU-Canada trade deal CETA, like its more well-known 'evil twin' deal, TTIP, is a new form of trade deal which targets the removal of social, health and environmental regulations, locks in privatisation of public services and introduces a 'corporate court' system so big business across North America can sue European governments in a private justice system. Worse still, CETA will worsen runaway climate change warns MARK DEARN

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Tomorrow (January 12), [British MEPs](#) will be among those voting on whether CETA is bad news for the environment, public health and food safety – ahead of a final vote on the deal in February. Liam Fox [bypassed parliamentary scrutiny](#) to sign the UK up to the deal under its first stage of ratification.

CETA has already put rocket boosters under runaway climate change by bringing high-polluting tar sands oil [into Europe](#). NASA scientist James Hansen warns that if tar sands oil is exploited as projected it will be ["game over for the climate"](#).

CETA doesn't merely threaten to undermine the Paris climate commitments. Its very existence is an affront to the fight against climate change; an unholy alliance of corporate lobbyists and US, Canadian and British government pressure ensured CETA derailed the Paris agreement before it took place, making a mockery of former UK Prime Minister David Cameron's "greenest ever government" spin and Canadian premier Justin Trudeau's claim that Southern countries ["shouldn't be punished for a problem they didn't create"](#).

Secret CETA negotiations only progressed in 2009 after the European Commission shelved crucial climate change legislation. These rules stopped high-polluting fossil from entering Europe, including [tar sands oil](#), which emits 23% more greenhouse gases over its lifetime than traditional fossil fuels. Research shows that 85% of the high polluting fuel must be left in the ground to meet climate change commitments.

Canada has spent more than [£24 million](#) lobbying against the rules, securing [more than 110 meetings in two years](#). Freedom of information documents reveal that the British government did all it could to support Canadian efforts, with BP ["bending the ear"](#) of then transport minister Norman Baker in order to demolish the "regulatory burden". Then, in June 2014, the [first tar sands oil shipment](#) arrived in Europe. As EU trade expert Yannick Jadot – now the French Green Party's presidential candidate – explained, the legislation: "... effectively vanished into obscurity for close to five years. And the CETA negotiations

proceeded.”

It was only after CETA negotiations finished that the now diluted legislation re-surfaced. “[Coincidence?](#)” asked Jadot. “Of course not.”

But importing tar sands oil into Europe is just one way CETA worsens runaway climate change. As with EU-US deal, TTIP, it contains a ‘[corporate court’ mechanism](#) granting fossil fuel corporations yet another means to block clean energy transition.

Time and again, this private justice system (investor-state dispute settlement) has been used to block green policies, which would harm Big Oil or energy firm profits. In total, some [35%](#) of cases relate to oil, mining, gas and electricity.

Under these corporate court powers, Germany has been sued by a Swedish energy firm for [€4.7 billion](#) for banning nuclear power in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster; Canada has been sued for [hundreds of millions of dollars](#) for passing a moratorium on fracking – were the UK to retract [fracking permissions](#), it too could face similar cases even after Brexit; and [Uganda](#), among [others](#), has faced a secret corporate law suit for daring to levy windfall taxes on oil companies.

As the European Commission told ExxonMobil in a [secret TTIP meeting](#), these deals are about far more than trade between two blocs: their intention is to set a template for the world, one which is “in the interest of the energy sector, and especially globally active companies like Shell or ExxonMobil”.

What Big Oil companies see as “burdensome regulations” are for millions around the world the difference between life and death.

If CETA passes, those politicians who failed to vote against this deadly deal will be complicit in the climate devastation it triggers.

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