The secret structure of the Tar Sands Coalition

The North American Tar Sands Coalition, which has no official organizational structure, is not incorporated, and has no mechanisms of accountability. According to internal documents acquired by the Dominion, the decisionmaking structure is intended to be “invisible to the outside.” But the power to make funding decisions and formulate strategy is concentrated in precisely the part of the structure that intends to be “invisible.”

1. A secret list of foundations provide a secret amount of funding to the Tar Sands Coalition. Numerous community-level groups have been referred to the coalition when seeking funding. Foundation funding for tar sands work is effectively not available except through the coalition.

2. The “invisible” steering committee controls funding to ENGOs and groups and sets strategy.

3. The coalition’s media coordinators “develop messaging” and “direct media opportunities to the appropriate groups.”

Pembina Institute • Environmental Defense-Canada • ForestEthics • Ecojustice • Greenpeace • Sierra Club • Canadian Boreal Initiative • World Wildlife Fund • (and anyone else who wants funding...)

“Offsetting Resistance: The effects of foundation funding and corporate fronts;” by Macdonald Stainsby and Dru Oja Jay