



Standoff: Oil's Deep State

Dr. Kevin Taft

Former Leader of the Opposition in Alberta and Best-Selling Author

May 28, 2019

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

Fossil fuels gave birth to modern society, and their emissions could bring modern society to an end. This session will delve into issues of global warming and democracy, helping participants gain deeper understanding of the challenges Canada's economy and politics face in transitioning to a zero emissions future.

Fossil fuels have brought untold benefits: planes, trains, and automobiles; modern agriculture; mass manufacturing; plastics and steel; the rise of the middle class; the demise of slavery; and increased leisure time, to mention a few. But emissions from fossil fuels are driving a global environmental catastrophe. Global warming is a death knell for the fossil fuel industry, and the fossil fuel industry is fighting for its life by targeting democratic institutions. What are the implications for democracy? For the environment? For you?

Former Alberta opposition leader and best-selling author Kevin Taft will draw on a wide-range of sources and experience to deliver information, encourage discussion, and provoke thought. His day-long presentation will cover the rise and importance of Canada's oil industry and the science of global warming, and will then build an analysis of the impact of the oil industry on democracy. There will be built-in opportunities for discussion.

Outline

Morning Sessions: 9:00am-12:00pm

1. The history, size, and importance of Canada's petroleum industry.
2. Thinking about global warming: What the industry knew and when they knew it. This section will include basic science and economics of global warming.
3. Modern democracy: an insider's view of the institutions of democracy.

Afternoon Sessions: 1:30pm - 4:30pm

4. Oil's Deep State in action. What is a "deep state," how does it work, what's the evidence, and what is its effect?
5. The coming energy revolution: Why the next decade is likely to see the beginning of the end of fossil fuel use, and what this means to the economics of the industry.
6. What is to be done personally, locally, nationally, globally?





Required Readings

Taft, Kevin. 2017. *Oil's Deep State*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, Publishers:

Part 2: "Capture", pp. 102-128. Please see [Course Reserves website](#)

The Luntz Research Companies "Straight Talk" Republican communications strategy, available online at https://www.motherjones.com/files/LuntzResearch_environment.pdf

Philp, Mark. 2001. "Corruption and State Capture: An Analytical Framework," Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, available online at:

https://www.academia.edu/2229144/Corruption_and_state_capture_an_analytical_framework

Mike De Souza et al. 2018. "Alberta regulator privately estimates oilpatch's financial liabilities are hundreds of billions more than what it tells public." November 1, *National Observer*. Available online at:

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/11/01/news/alberta-regulator-privately-estimates-oilpatches-financial-liabilities-are-hundreds>

Additional Resources

Karl, Terry Lynn. 1997. *The Paradox of Plenty*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Lofgren, Mike. 2016. *The Deep State*. New York: Viking.

Mayer, Jane. 2017. *Dark Money*. New York: Anchor Books.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2011. *Carbon Democracy*. London: Verso.

Seba, Tony. 2014. *Clean Disruption of Energy and Transportation*.

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