

People living in communities near oil sands can breathe easy: study

April 13 2010

Warren Kindzierski, University of Alberta researcher in the School of Public Health, says people living in the communities of Fort McMurray, Fort Mckay and Fort Chipewyan should feel confident that the air they are breathing is safe.

Kindzierski's research has found that, despite ongoing development, it's apparent that there is little or no pattern to the changes in concentrations of various [air](#) pollutants across the [oil sands](#) region over the past 10 years.

This study came about when Kindzierski was asked by the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association to test how and if air quality is being affected in the three communities that are the closest to oil sands activity: Fort McMurray, Fort Mckay and Fort Chipewyan.

Kindzierski investigated outdoor air quality between 1998 and 2007. He and his team analyzed four air monitoring stations in the three communities and eight other monitoring stations closer to oil sands developments.

Air pollutants of interest included oxides of nitrogen, sulphur dioxide, airborne particulate matter, ground level ozone and reduced sulphur compounds, all of which could have [negative health effects](#) in high concentration.

Kindzierski says over the past 10 years changes in concentrations were

small or did not occur at all during this period of time for most of the air pollutants. He adds the rate of increase that was observed for other specific [air pollutants](#) in almost all cases was very small.

Kindzierski says these findings are positive from a public health point-of-view and adds that these three communities ultimately have better [air quality](#) than larger cities such as Edmonton.

More information:

To view where the air monitoring stations are located link to:
wbea.org/content/view/56/111/

A copy of Kindzierski's report can be found at:
www.phs.ualberta.ca/reports.cfm

Provided by University of Alberta

Citation: People living in communities near oil sands can breathe easy: study (2010, April 13)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-people-oil-sands-easy.html>

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