

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suncor Energy submits regulatory application for new tailings technology

Calgary, Alberta (October 23, 2009) – Suncor Energy Inc. reports that it has submitted a regulatory application for changes to the company's oil sands mining and extraction operations that target significant improvement in the speed of reclamation of oil sands tailings at the company's existing oil sands operations near Fort McMurray. The proposed process changes and implementation of new technology, called Tailings Reduction Operations (TRO) are subject to approval by the Energy Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Environment and Suncor's Board of Directors.

"TRO is a significant advance in tailings management and reclamation," says Kirk Bailey, executive vice president, Oil Sands. "We believe it will help us meet new provincial regulatory requirements and, just as importantly, the changing expectations of stakeholders."

Tailings are a mixture of fine clay, sand, water and residual bitumen produced through the oil sands extraction process. As tailings settle, a portion will eventually form into *mature fine tailings* (MFT), a substance that historically has taken many decades to firm up sufficiently for planting and surface reclamation. Consolidated tailings (CT) technology, pioneered by Suncor in the 1990s, is the current method of speeding this settling process. The CT process adds coarse sand and gypsum to accelerate the release of water.

"Consolidated Tailings has proven effective, but in this industry, the focus is always on developing new technology and better processes," says Bailey.

The implementation of TRO involves converting fluid fine tailings more rapidly into a solid landscape suitable for reclamation. In this process, MFT is mixed with a polymer flocculent, then deposited in thin layers over sand beaches with shallow slopes. The resulting product is a dry material that is capable of being reclaimed in place or moved to another location for final reclamation. This drying process occurs over a matter of weeks, allowing more rapid reclamation activities to occur. The new process is expected to improve management of tailings going forward, and can also be used to reduce existing tailings inventory at Suncor's operations.

Suncor has been working closely with key stakeholders to ensure they understand the proposed new process and technology and the company understands any concerns they may have. This stakeholder engagement will continue through the regulatory review process. Pending approvals, Suncor plans to begin rapidly accelerating the implementation TRO in 2010.

"In 2010, Suncor plans to officially complete the reclamation of our first tailings pond to a solid surface," said Bailey. "It's fitting that in the same year we reach an important reclamation milestone, we expect to implement improved technology to increase the pace of reclamation. It's all about continuous improvement in our environmental, social and economic performance."

To view a video explaining TRO, visit www.suncor.com/tailings.

This news release contains forward-looking statements identified by the words "target", "subject to", "believe", "expected", "going forward", "will continue", "plans" and similar expressions that address expectations or

projections about the future. Forward-looking statements are based on Suncor's current goals, expectations, estimates, projections and assumptions made in light of its experiences and the risks, uncertainties and other factors related to its business. Assumptions used to develop our outlook are based on year-to-date performance and management's best estimates for the remainder of the year. Readers are cautioned that actual results could differ materially from those expressed or implied as a result of changes to Suncor's plans and the impact of events, risks and uncertainties discussed in Suncor's current annual information form/form 40-F, annual and quarterly reports to shareholders and other documents filed with Canadian securities commissions at www.sedar.com and the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) at www.sec.gov.

Suncor Energy Inc. is Canada's premier integrated energy company. Suncor's operations include oil sands development and upgrading, conventional and offshore oil and gas production, petroleum refining, and product marketing under the Petro-Canada brand – a proud National Partner to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. While working to responsibly develop petroleum resources, Suncor is also developing a growing renewable energy portfolio. Suncor's common shares (symbol: SU) are listed on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges.

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