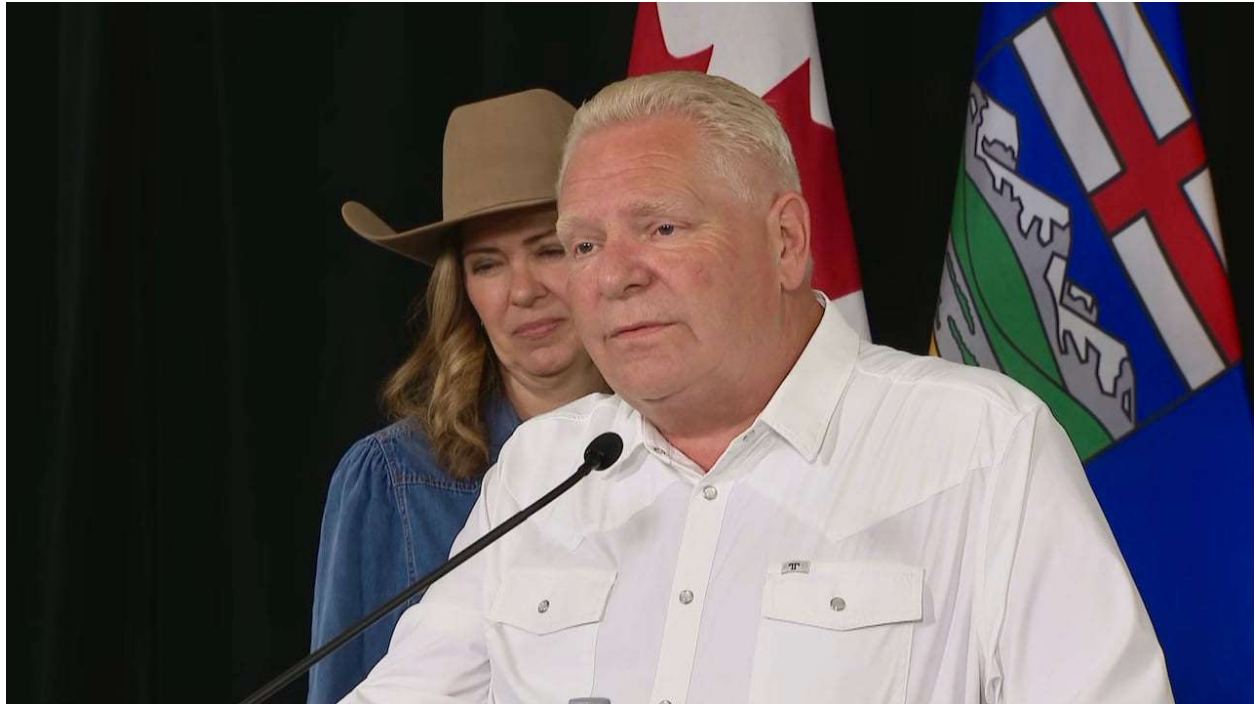


Ford, Smith unveil plan for new 'Northern Shield' oil pipeline between Alberta and Ontario

Manitoba government has refused to join the project

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Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith announce a proposed route for the Northern Shield pipeline project. (CBC News)

The premiers of Alberta and Ontario unveiled a proposed 3,300 km pipeline to transport oil from Western Canada to refineries in southern Ontario.

The pipeline would transport an estimated 500,000 barrels per day of oil with possible expansion to 800,000 barrels per day.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and Ontario Premier Doug Ford made the announcement on Monday in Calgary, included the unveiling of a proposed route that would begin at Hardisty, Alta., and travel near Regina and Winnipeg before reaching Sarnia, Ont.

The project is still in its infancy and there is no estimated price tag or timeline for the project.

Last fall, the Ontario government launched a feasibility study to develop the project, including an understanding of the potential costs. The provincial government is also beginning consultation with Indigenous communities.

The pipeline proposal follows a prior agreement among Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan to pursue an energy corridor.

"We need to take action now to protect Canadian jobs and Canadian families. We need to move quicker, faster, immediate. That is why I'm thrilled to be here today making progress on our agreement from last year as we unveil the route for the Northern Shield Energy Corridor," said Ford.

Proposed route for the Northern Shield energy corridor



The vision for the corridor is to carry oil, natural gas and other energy products from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries and ports in southern Ontario.

Ford's office told CBC News the feasibility study has cost \$11 million to date. The final cost will be determined once it's completed, which is expected by the end of the year.



The Manitoba government has refused to join the initiative because Indigenous groups are not involved from the start.

Premier Wab Kinew said Manitoba will pursue large-scale projects that begin with Indigenous partnership rather than consultation after the fact.

"Major nation-building projects have to be built the right way. That's why we're continuing to work directly with northern communities, Indigenous Nations and the Manitoba Crown Indigenous Corporation as we advance discussions around Churchill's future. Those conversations will continue, because lasting economic development is built in partnership," said Kinew, in an emailed statement.

Alberta and Ontario's premiers have unveiled the proposed route for a 3,300-kilometre pipeline that would transport oil from Western Canada to refineries in southern Ontario. The Northern Shield energy corridor would start at Hardisty, Alta., pass near Regina and Winnipeg, and end in Sarnia. What's still unknown are an estimated price tag, timeline and details about whether private investors are involved.

On Monday, Ford praised Kinew and seemed hopeful of a resolution.

"He has to consult a little more with his folks in Manitoba, but we'll work something out and I'm 100 per cent behind putting a pipeline up to Churchill," he said.

Ford said the Ontario government could be the owner of the pipeline and foot the bill for construction, if needed.

"Let's take a look at all options," he said. "I think it's a great investment."

On Sunday, Ford said he had a meeting with Dawn Farrell, who is leading the federal government's Major Projects Office, to discuss this project.

The pipeline could eventually allow for Alberta oil to be exported to Europe, said Smith.

"Alberta is ready to work with our provincial and federal counterparts, Indigenous partners and industry leaders to advance this proposed pipeline and energy corridor," said Smith.

Ontario already relies on Western Canada for much of its oil. However, they use pipelines that travel through the U.S., which the 'Northern Shield' would not do.

Imports from outside Canada accounted for only around 15 per cent of total crude oil consumed by Ontario's refineries between 2020 and 2023, according to the Canada Energy Regulator.

Ontario has three refineries in Sarnia and another in Nanticoke.



Monday's announcement comes on the heels of Smith moving ahead with a different pipeline project to the West Coast last week.