

## **Energy from Northern Basins: A Complex, Yet Positive Issue That Will Change Canada's North**

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The energy industry is increasingly aware of the resource value of Canada's North and this renewal of interest will eventually embrace all northern sedimentary basins. Within Canada, the issue of energy self-sufficiency is again of both public and political concern, but it is now a North American issue reflecting the status of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The North wants a viable economy and job and wealth-creating activities will clearly revolve around a resource-based economy at least for the next two or three decades. The quest for northern energy will have a profound impact on the North, its inhabitants, its environment and its economy, and that impact extends to all of Canada. The voice of northerners has grown in importance and is now a force governments and industry have to reckon with. That voice, as trumpeted by aboriginal and non-aboriginal leaders, expresses both excitement and concern over the upcoming oil and gas development. Excitement comes from the promise that this new economic development will bring growth and prosperity. Concerns are expressed over the sustainability of resource development. The North is a fragile environment, one that would be affected more rapidly and more dramatically by mismanagement of the land and its resources. The outstanding environmental record of Norway, the world's third largest oil and gas producing country, provides a powerful argument for those who believe that oil and gas development can take place in a northern country in a manner respectful of both the communities and the environment.