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An Introduction to Canada's Oil Sands - the resource and its issues

par

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The Canadian Oil Sands have become recognized as one of the world's largest recoverable reserves of hydrocarbons, but their development is not without controversy. This talk provides a brief overview of the resource itself (location, size, nature of the raw material), the current methods used in its recovery (mining and in-situ), and the need for "upgrading" to allow for its refinement to standard products. There are many challenges in developing this resource to make it economic, and hence it is sometimes referred to as "technology oil". Developing such a resource on the scale of millions of barrels/day also has implications for the local and global environment in terms of land use, water use and excess production of CO₂. Discussion is provided on these environmental issues in terms of past and current practices.