

# Q&A With Suncor's Chief Sustainability Officer Arlene Strom - 2023 Report on Sustainability

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We broke new ground when we first began publicly reporting our sustainability performance in the mid-1990s. Twenty-eight years later, our Report on Sustainability and its companion publication, the Climate Report, continue the practice of disclosing our progress in more than a dozen areas of environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance. Read more on our ESG progress in our reports [here](#).

We sat down with Arlene to ask a few questions related to our 2022 sustainability progress and performance across the organization and here's what she had to say.

There's been a spotlight on Suncor's safety record. What steps have been taken to improve performance?

Our core value is safety above all else. That means people need to go home safely at the end of every day to their families and friends. We knew we had work to do in this area and have taken significant steps to address this issue in the past year. First and foremost, this involves frontline assurance and having leaders spend more time in the field so we understand the risks and address them. We are working to simplify our processes and policies so they are easy to access and are understandable. And we've involved our frontline workers to help identify solutions. We've also adopted a new philosophy called Human and Organizational Principles. Our focus is on continuous improvement and ensuring that if we make a mistake, we fail safely. And we've made significant investments in technologies such as the collision avoidance system we're installing in every vehicle at each of our mines as well as the fatigue management system that uses facial recognition technology to alert operators if it detects signs of drowsiness. We also identified contractor management as another critical area. We've added more structure around how many contractors are working on our sites while ensuring they have the training and tools to stay safe while performing critical work for us.

Water management has been highlighted as a critical issue for the industry. What is Suncor doing to address it?

Water management is critical to how we run our business and it's equally important to the First Nation and Métis communities who live near our operations. Water is sacred to them and intrinsic to their relationship with the Earth and each other. This is a shared issue that we need to work on together. The starting point is finding agreement on water quality and what is required for Indigenous communities to implement their treaty rights. That will help guide what steps we need to take to safely manage accumulated water and tailings on our sites. The other related challenge is minimizing our tailings inventory and reclaiming the land we've disturbed. This will require reducing the amount of water we store on our sites. We've made real progress at our Base Plant operation in reducing the amount of fresh water we take in. But we also need to manage every single drop of water that falls on our sites, whether it is rain, snow melt or run off. Storing that water slows down our ability to reclaim the land we've disturbed. Moving it around uses energy, which creates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. There are opportunities to address these challenges. For us, the starting point is working with Indigenous Peoples to find agreements on the solutions to manage water and how we reclaim the land. Finding that common ground is important as government works to finalize regulations in this area.

Both you and Suncor have been very strong advocates for implementing the Truth and Reconciliation's Commission Calls to Action. Why is this so important?

I love that what I believe in personally is connected to the work that I do. The Journey of Reconciliation is

critical to our future as a company and a country. Acknowledging what happened in the past is an important step in moving forward. I feel a tremendous personal obligation to be part of reconciliation and I'm also proud we've made these commitments as a company. I hope it enables us to walk side-by-side with Indigenous Peoples and be open to learning new ways of seeing and doing things. It's extremely important to Suncor because so many of our operations are located on or contiguous with traditional Indigenous lands. And we believe our business should also benefit the Indigenous communities that live near our operations. There are huge opportunities in working together with Indigenous Peoples. A good example is the Willow Lake Métis Nation, who purchased 205 acres of land in their traditional territory for their community. They were able to raise the capital for this purchase through their participation in the Astisiy Limited Partnership with Suncor and seven other Indigenous and Métis communities.

You recently joined the steering committee for the Pathways Alliance, the consortium of Canada's largest oil sands producers who are working together to address climate change. What do you hope to accomplish in that role?

It's a tremendous honour to be a part of that group. I give the people who came before me a ton of credit for getting us to where we are and it's a privilege to continue their work. One of the things that gets me up in the morning is that I can do meaningful work that helps us to contribute to the energy transition and reconciliation. The Pathways Alliance to net zero is squarely in the middle of both of those issues. We want to make significant progress on our foundational project - carbon capture and storage. There's a lot of work to do and we need to begin a regulatory process. We need to work with First Nations and Métis communities to understand their concerns and the opportunity. We also must get our commercial agreements in place among the six companies that make up Pathways. We need a framework in place with provincial and federal governments. By the end of 2023, I hope we are significantly closer to this foundational project becoming a reality. There's a lot of work ahead, but it's exciting.

You've spoken about your personal pride in seeing the advancement of inclusion and diversity at Suncor. Is there one initiative that stands out for you in this area?

There's a deep connection between creating a respectful work environment and having a safe work environment. I'm very proud of the progress we've made, whether it's marching in Calgary's Pride parade for the first time ever in 2022 or publishing our guidebook for employees who are undergoing gender transition so their leaders can help support them; and having lactation rooms at our operating facilities for new parents who have recently returned to work. At the same time, our frontline workers have told us there's more work to do in having an inclusive and respectful workplace. I feel fortunate to live in Alberta, which continues to be enriched by its diversity. My husband often talks about it as a gift, whether it is receiving a plate of sweets from a friend to mark Ramadan or being invited to a teepee pole skinning ceremony at the Piikani First Nation. I've seen and experienced the progress we've made in this area. I recognize we have more travelling on this journey as an organization but we are committed to moving towards the right destination.

Arlene Strom at the 2022 Truth and Reconciliation fireside chat and panel discussion

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**Contact Info:**

Spokesperson: Suncor Energy

Website: <https://www.3blmedia.com/profiles/suncor-energy>

Email: [info@3blmedia.com](mailto:info@3blmedia.com)

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