

## Obama visits the Tar Nation

U.S. President Barack Obama's state visit to Ottawa on February 19 was a big victory for the global climate.

President Obama made it clear to Prime Minister Harper in Ottawa that the United States government intends to tackle the climate crisis head on by moving the economy to cleaner energy sources. President Obama noted that tar sands have a heavy carbon footprint and did not endorse their further development as Harper had hoped. And while the President noted the importance of new technologies to clean up the tar sands, tar sands oil was not included in the new Clean Energy Dialogue, under which the United States and Canada will work together on cleaner vehicles, a smart power grid and carbon capture and storage technology for coal.

In his public remarks, Obama emphasized the importance of engaging in the multilateral climate negotiations leading to the Copenhagen conference in December 2009. He clearly understood the dangers of negotiating a bilateral Climate Treaty with a country headed by a Prime Minister who prior to his election had declared that "climate change was a socialist conspiracy." Obama understood that such a treaty probably would hinder attempts to achieve a Copenhagen consensus with other countries (especially developing countries such as China and India) on the deeper cuts to greenhouse gas emissions that are needed to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Canadian and American environmental groups (including Sierra Club Canada and Sierra Club U.S.) worked closely in

*continued on page 5*

