

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 18, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our concerns that the Keystone XL Pipeline Draft Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) fails to reflect the full environmental impacts of the proposed pipeline. We strongly encourage the State Department to reevaluate the SEIS and its assessment of the proposed pipeline's impacts on climate change, our natural resources, our economy, and low-income and minority communities.

**Climate Change:** Climate change is occurring at unprecedented levels, and last year was the hottest on record in the United States. As President Obama said in his Second Inaugural Address, “We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations.” It would be incredibly difficult – if not impossible – to meet that promise while allowing the Keystone XL pipeline to move forward.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Keystone XL pipeline could lead to a 27 million metric ton increase in carbon pollution, the equivalent of adding more than six million new cars to U.S. roads.

The Draft SEIS mistakenly claims that Keystone XL would not have a significant impact on tar sands oil production – and thus carbon pollution – because it is likely that the oil would eventually be delivered to market through other means. As the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce found in December, “Canada needs pipe — and lots of it — to avoid the opportunity cost of stranding over a million barrels a day of potential crude oil growth.” Without the Keystone XL Pipeline, there is currently no other practical means of importing that much oil. Moreover, any future import pipeline construction would have to go through the same process as Keystone XL, meaning tar sands transport, production, and associated pollution is not predetermined.

**Natural Resource Impacts:** The Draft SEIS fails to adequately recognize the impacts of Keystone XL on our natural resources. The Natural Resources Defense Council warns that the more acidic and corrosive consistency of the type of tar sands oil being piped into the U.S. makes oil spills more likely. The SEIS must include a detailed analysis of the impacts that the pipeline would have on natural resources and wildlife in the area surrounding the construction

corridor, along with extensive information on the inevitable effects of tar sands oil leaks and spills.

The Keystone XL's predecessor, the Keystone Pipeline, suffered twelve leaks in its first year of operation. The proposed pipeline route crosses over 1000 water bodies, including over 50 perennial rivers or streams, and impacts several aquifers, such as the Ogallala Aquifer which supplies water to two million Americans. The route crosses countless private family wells that are used for drinking water and agriculture. Spills and leaks would also threaten wildlife, such as whooping cranes and bald eagles that rely heavily on the surrounding areas for survival. We are gravely reminded of the recent incident in which a million gallons of tar sands oil poured into Michigan's Kalamazoo River from a tar sands pipeline. The spill exposed residents to toxic chemicals, coated wildlife and has caused long-term damage to the local economy and ecosystem.

**Economic Impacts:** The Draft SEIS does not adequately consider the impacts of leaks and spills as well as increases in greenhouse gas emissions on employment and the economy. Farming, ranching, and tourism are major sources of employment along the Keystone XL pipeline's proposed route. Approximately 571,000 workers are directly employed in the agricultural sector in the states along the proposed pipeline corridor. Water contamination resulting from leaks and spills could have significant economic costs and could result in job loss in those sectors. The SEIS must include an assessment of the economic impacts on workers and communities as a result of environmental degradation, air pollution, and water contamination from the pipeline.

**Environmental Justice Issues:** The Draft SEIS fails to adequately assess the effects of the pipeline on low-income and minority communities, including Indian tribal communities, which will be disproportionately impacted by the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Draft SEIS concludes that tar sands oil will displace oil already being refined and therefore will not have increased pollution impacts on refinery communities. Refining tar sands oil, however, emits more pollution than conventional crude oil and results in higher emissions of toxic sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide. Those emissions cause smog and acid rain and contribute to respiratory diseases like asthma. Refining tar sands oil would increase air pollution in refining areas which could further exacerbate the health impacts on the mostly low-income and minority communities in those areas. The SEIS must quantify air pollution from refining and analyze the health impacts on already burdened communities. Additionally, the SEIS must detail the fulfillment of the Department of State's federal trust responsibility for government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes on the natural and cultural resources impacts of the pipeline.

We urge the State Department to address the above concerns in the final SEIS of the Keystone XL pipeline. These concerns not only affect constituencies along the pipeline corridor and in refinery communities, they affect all Americans through increased risk of extreme weather from climate change.

Sincerely,

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Member of Congress

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*Donna M. Christensen*

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