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## **Pipeline safety concerns landowner groups**

Governors of Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska asked to oppose special permit

**Billings, Mont.** – Landowner groups are seeking help from the governors of Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska to assure that TransCanada uses the safest material and practices in building, operating, and monitoring the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline in rural areas.

The Northern Plains Resource Council, Dakota Rural Action, and Landowners for Fairness have sent letters asking the governors to oppose a permit allowing TransCanada to use thinner pipe in the proposed pipeline.

“We want the best and safest pipeline possible,” said Lyle Quick, Northern Plains spokesperson from Circle, Mont. “We want to let people and communities along the pipeline route know that TransCanada wants special permission to use thinner pipe. We don’t think it’s fair.”

TransCanada has applied for a special permit from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The permit would let TransCanada operate the Keystone XL Pipeline at a higher percentage of the pipe’s maximum operating pressure than any other existing oil pipeline.

In effect, the permit would let TransCanada use thinner, cheaper steel in areas not considered “High Consequence Areas.” These high consequence areas include railroad crossings, highways, river crossings, and “High Population Areas.”

“We’re offended that TransCanada and Department of Transportation apparently think of most of our states as a “Low Consequence Area,” David Niemi, a rancher from Buffalo, S.D., and member of Dakota Rural Action. The proposed pipeline would cross his ranch for 12 miles.

“Most of the area covered by the Keystone XL Pipeline in Nebraska is right on top of our most precious resource, other than our land, the water in the Ogallala Aquifer,” said Dan Kramer of Atkinson, Neb., and member of Landowners for Fairness. The pipeline would cross his ranch property for one-half mile.

“Our water is as precious as gold,” Kramer said. “How can we in good conscience risk these cherished assets on pipe that does not meet industry standards in the United States?”

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