

**EARTHJUSTICE-INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK-MINNESOTA CENTER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY-PLAINS JUSTICE-SIERRA CLUB-WESTERN
ORGANIZATION OF RESOURCE COUNCILS**

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**Landowners, labor, environmentalists and tribes warn of
risks from dirty oil pipelines**

Tar sands pipelines from Canada threaten water, farmland and communities

Landowners joined with steelworkers, environmentalists and tribes to warn that construction of three massive pipelines designed to carry dirty oil from the Alberta tar sands into the United States would threaten communities across the West and Midwest. Today, a coalition of groups sent letters to the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) urging that the agency not approve the pipelines as proposed.

PHMSA is considering three new U.S. pipelines, and previously approved another:

- The Keystone XL pipeline would carry heavy tar sands crude from Canada through Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma into Texas.
- The TransCanada Keystone I is a 2,148 mile tar sands crude oil pipeline under construction that runs from Hardisty, Alberta through the Dakotas, Nebraska, across Kansas and Missouri and then into Illinois, with a spur into Oklahoma.
- The Enbridge Alberta Clipper Pipeline would run from Alberta to Wisconsin via North Dakota and Minnesota.
- The Southern Lights Diluent Pipelines would connect Manhattan, Illinois with Alberta via Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota, and would transport diluent (a chemical thinner to facilitate tar sands crude oil flow) from U.S. refineries to Canada for blending with tar sands crude.

Local citizens have expressed concern that the agency has not given them an opportunity to weigh in on emergency response plans for the pipelines, which pose a threat of oil spills.

“Our rural volunteer fire department is still waiting on Keystone’s emergency response plan,” said Paul Mathews, a Dakota Resource Council member and volunteer firefighter from Cogswell, N.D., whose farmland is crossed by the Keystone I Pipeline. “In my opinion, as a firefighter, the pipeline should not operate until the fire department has

adequate time to study the plan and acquire any necessary equipment to deal with an accident.”

The United Steelworkers have also challenged the government's permit review process on the safety of thin-wall pipe sought by TransCanada for the Keystone XL pipeline, citing safety concerns.

“The company does not address what internal corrosion may occur from the higher mineral content existing in tar sand bitumen,” said Tom Conway, International Vice President of the United Steelworkers. “We also question the use of thinner pipe allowing operation at a greater percentage of maximum operating pressure that will have less ability to withstand corrosion over time.”

Local landowners are also concerned that the agency isn't requiring adequate safety measures for the pipelines where they run through rural communities.

“Those of us in rural Montana need the same safety protections as anywhere else,” said Chad Taylor, a McCone County, Mont., rancher and Northern Plains Resource Council member. “TransCanada shouldn't cut corners and should use the same pipe thickness, pressure, and safety level throughout the proposed route.”

Members of tribes have also expressed concern about the threat of oil spills and contamination of water sources along the route.

"We are greatly concerned of the contamination that could occur if a spill were to happen within the waterways of the Leech Lake Reservation," said Marty Cobenais of the Indigenous Environmental Network. "We are also concerned about the potential of a spill in the Cass Lake area, where bald eagles fish and nest."

Groups signing the letters include:

- Western Organization of Resource Councils
- Dakota Resource Council
- Dakota Rural Action
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- Earthjustice
- Indigenous Environmental Network
- Landowners for Fairness
- Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Plains Justice
- Sierra Club
- United Steelworkers

A copy of the Western Organization of Resource Councils letter to PHMSA is available at www.worc.org.