



Testimony for House Energy and Environment

March 14th, 2013

Opponent Testimony on HCR 5014

Mr. Chairman Hedke and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am Zack Pistora, Legislative Director for Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak on the issue of the Keystone XL pipeline as expressed in HCR 5014.

On behalf of Kansas Sierra Club and Kansans all across the state, I stand to oppose HCR 5014 and hope you will too after understanding the Keystone XL pipeline is a bad move for our energy needs, our economy, and our environmental well-being.

The Keystone XL pipeline proposed by TransCanada is an 875 mile pipeline extension to push an estimated 830,000 barrels per day of heavy crude tar sands oil some 2000 miles from Alberta, Canada to Houston and Port Arthur, Texas. This tar sands oil, or diluted bitumen, carried by Keystone XL is laden with higher levels of heavy metals, sulfur, carcinogens and neurotoxins than conventional oil. Expanding the Keystone pipeline would increase health risks from air pollution to nearby communities of oil refineries as well as increase the public health risk in damage to people, water supplies, and farmland due to a spill.

The Keystone XL pipeline would not be good overall for jobs and our economy. The U.S. State Department's analysis in their Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement report predicts only 3,900 construction jobs will be made over a span of two years, and only 35 permanent jobs are slated for pipeline operation. An estimated 34.5 million dollars is expected from property tax revenue. These small economic gains do not outdo the negative economic consequences according to an independent study conducted by Cornell Global Labor Institute. The study concludes (and the State Department agrees) Keystone XL will divert Tar Sands oil now supplying Midwest refineries, and exported at higher prices to the global market. Thus, if Keystone XL goes through, consumers in the Midwest could be paying 10 to 20 cents more per gallon of gas and diesel. These additional costs (totaling between \$2-4 billion) will suppress other spending and therefore cost jobs.

The Keystone XL pipeline would be a major threat to our environment. With almost unanimous agreement for already-occurring climate disruption, the U.S. ought to keep its hands clean from more carbon pollution that would result from the Tar Sands oil. The State Department concluded a 17 percent higher annual greenhouse gas emissions output with Tar Sands than regular crude oil. The extra pollution to our climate will only speed up the effects of



climate change and puts our country on a path in the wrong direction for addressing our fossil fuel dependence. Also, because the pipeline crosses thousands of water bodies, including 56 major perennial rivers and lakes and acres of sensitive wildlife habitat, the pipeline poses a great risk to water contamination if a spill were to occur. Indeed, TransCanada predicts a potential for 2 major spills to happen over 10 years. But if Keystone XL is anything like its Keystone I project, there will be more spills than expected. Keystone I had 12 spills in its first year of operation, when it touted a possible one spill every seven years. According to the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, of the total national pipelines, 1,341 serious pipeline incidents have occurred in the last five years, resulting in 62 fatalities, 331 injuries, over a half million barrels of hazardous liquid spilled, and \$2.72 billion in property damage. Tar Sands mining also destroys a natural carbon sink and wildlife habitat, the Canadian Boreal Forest, which represents a good portion of North America's remaining forest land.

We should not risk this environmental harm when we have cleaner sources of energy already available in our country that do not pose as serious threat to our aquifers and farmland. Kansas should not support a resolution that raises costs for consumers on gas for the benefit of oil companies' pocketbooks. We can create better jobs than what Keystone XL gives us.

More than anything, the Keystone XL pipeline is the wrong approach for America's future. There will be a time when the United States must accept responsibility for its energy consequences on our ecosystem and our lives. We must turn the corner on our fossil fuel addiction and begin to employ clean energy and energy-conservation initiatives for a more advanced, healthier infrastructure, a sustainable future, and better job creation.

Please put Kansas on the side of energy independence, jobs, and environmental stewardship by opposing the Keystone XL expansion and promoting homegrown clean energy. Please reject HCR 5014.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I hope you will consider our concerns. I will gladly stand for any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Zack Pistora
Sierra Club – Kansas Chapter