

Rep. Schakowsky

Opening Statement

February 6, 2012

Full Committee Markup – H.R. 3548 the North American Energy Access Act

This bill is nothing more than a shortsighted handout to big oil. The jobs estimates voiced by the majority are wildly distorted, and pale in comparison to the clean energy jobs that could be created if this body was serious about our energy future. Furthermore, the irreversible damage to our water supply that would result from a serious leak in the pipeline would destroy large swaths of American farmland and contaminate drinking water for millions of Americans.

Supporters of the Keystone XL Pipeline claim the project will create 20,000 jobs. Even a Vice President of the company petitioning for Keystone, Transcanada, has said that number reflects temporary jobs, and admits that permanent jobs will be in the hundreds. Cornell University researchers found that the Pipeline would create far fewer temporary construction jobs: 500-1400. They went on to say that “the construction of Keystone XL will create far fewer jobs in the U.S. than its proponents have claimed and may actually destroy more jobs than it generates.” The claim that the project could cost more jobs than it creates reflects the very real risk that a Keystone spill would result in widespread contamination of agricultural lands and

water. A University of Nebraska study concluded that 91 major spills can be expected from the XL pipeline over the lifetime of the pipeline.

2.4 million jobs in the clean energy sector and related industries have already been created. The Department of Energy Loan Guarantee Program, which was highly criticized by our friends across the aisle, has already created 50,000 direct jobs. According to the Center for American Progress, clean energy investment creates more than 30 times the number of jobs as the fossil fuel industry per \$1 million spent. A study from the University of California (Berkeley) demonstrated that shifting from dirty energy toward energy efficient sources creates net jobs, and that continued efforts to expand green energy would create millions more jobs.

Beyond the irrational economic argument for Keystone XL posed by the majority, the pipeline would directly threaten the water we drink and the produce we consume. The pipeline would cross major rivers, including the Missouri, Yellowstone, and Red rivers, as well as key sources of drinking and agricultural water, such as the Ogallala Aquifer, which supplies drinking water for two million Americans and 30 percent of American irrigation water. The XL Pipeline's predecessor suffered 10 major leaks in its first year of operation, and similar spills in the Ogallala Aquifer would cripple many plains states. That is why the President was right not to move forward with the pipeline at this time.

We cannot afford to cling to oil as the energy technologies of the future take hold. And we cannot turn a blind eye to the immense environmental ramifications of moving forward with this pipeline. I cannot support this legislation, and I yield back.