

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

March 14, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write today to urge you to reject the Keystone XL pipeline. The XL pipeline project would unlock huge reserves of carbon that scientists have warned need to stay in the ground if we are to avoid worsening climate change that could prove irreversible.

Since 2009, the U.S. and 167 other nations have agreed that increases in global temperatures should be kept to no more than 2 degrees Celsius. According to climate science experts, we can pour no more than 500 gigatons worth of additional carbon into the atmosphere if we want to maintain a reasonable chance of staying below that 2 degree threshold. Right now, the fossil fuel industry plans to burn at least 2,795 gigatons worth of carbon reserves globally - over five times what we can burn to avoid climate disaster. The math doesn't add up. In order to meet our commitment to fight climate change, we need to keep at least 80 percent of carbon reserves below ground.

If Alberta's tar sands are fully developed, it would be virtually impossible to avoid a 2 degree global temperature increase. Keystone XL is a critical step in the full development of those tar sands. NASA climatologist James Hansen estimates that fully producing the tar sands would add 240 gigatons of carbon to the atmosphere – almost half of the world's remaining carbon budget. If approved, Keystone XL and other tar sands pipelines would spell “game over for the climate” according to Hansen.

The State Department Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement claims that without Keystone XL, the Alberta tar sands would be developed at a similar rate under most projected scenarios. But the SEIS recognizes that rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline would raise transportation costs for tar sands, and under some scenarios, those cost increases would, in fact, slow development of the tar sands. An in-depth analysis by *Reuters* last year found that “oil-by-train may not be a substitute for Keystone pipeline” because of the much-higher cost of moving oil by rail. Even the business community disagrees with State's determination: a little over a year ago, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce found that “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.”

Even if State maintains its position that Keystone XL will not ultimately impact the amount of production of the Alberta tar sands, it ignores one major fact: no other means of transporting tar sands relies on the support of the U.S. State Department. According to State's own analysis, tar sands oil results in 17 percent more carbon pollution than conventional oil.

This is our country's opportunity to take a stand - not just for what is right, but for what is necessary.

If the United States is truly committed to avoiding a 2 degree temperature increase, we have to start by resisting this pipeline. Greenlighting Keystone XL would put us on an environmentally unsustainable path of tar sands development. Keystone XL and other would-be tar sands pipelines are not in our national interest. We urge you to reject the pipeline and keep tar sands oil in the ground where it belongs. We look forward to your final decision on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Jon Schabrowsky Mike Dringler

Rush Holt

Adam B. Schuff

Paul Stone

Barbara Lee

Jim Moran

Keith Ellison

Steve Cohen

Joe Latta

Chell P

Zoe Lofgren

Michael M. Hester

Carol Shear-Power

Rand M. Higgins

Judy Chu

Frank Palmer Jr.

Kathy Costa

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