

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

November 17, 2011

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Kerry,

It was recently announced by the State Department that a decision regarding the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline from the U.S.-Canadian border in Montana to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast has been postponed. It is now estimated that a decision will not be made until the first quarter of 2013.

This decision is disturbing and appears to put election year politics ahead of economic growth and energy security. With the unemployment rate at 9%, I have serious concerns about the impact this deferral may have on job creation. Reports indicate that the pipeline's construction will create up to 20,000 direct jobs immediately and could create tens of thousands of indirect jobs. Further, it would inhibit U.S. access to 800,000 barrels of Canadian oil daily from a stable and dependable economic partner, reinforcing our dependence on the Middle East and other volatile oil producing countries. Since this decision, it has been reported that Canada is already looking for other markets to sell their oil and once this opportunity to do business with a stable partner is gone, I fear it will be gone forever.

The State Department has already conducted a thorough review of the environmental impacts of the Keystone XL pipeline, finding that it would have no significant impact on the environment. I believe a greater threat to the environment would be to allow oil that would otherwise flow to the U.S. through the pipeline to be exported to countries with less efficient and less regulated industries and transportation systems. China, for example, is eager to fill the void should the pipeline extension be scrapped or indefinitely delayed.

I view approval of this pipeline as a strategic effort to improve ties with an important partner in the Western Hemisphere, which is essential to energy security, and ultimately our national security interests. For these reasons, I ask that the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hold a hearing as soon as possible to consider the State Department's recent decision in order to assess the full impact of postponement on U.S. industry, energy security, and economic growth.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Corker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BOB CORKER
United States Senator

Cc. Senator Richard Lugar, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations