

## Keystone XL Pipeline: A Stopgap

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Renewable resources are seemingly becoming one of the most diverse topics of discussion for both politics and civilians. The quest to find and develop new ideas as well as innovations is an ongoing process each day. The consumption and price of oil has been increasing for years, costing this country extraordinary amounts of money, jobs, and most importantly, the lives of our fallen troops. The strategy to use other countries' oil reserves before ours has shattered many lives and left broken homes, yet we are still left with high prices at the pump. The need for our country and economy now depends on utilizing on our oil reserves as well as Canada's while continuing to develop alternative forms of fuel and renewable resources. Although environmentalists may object to the Keystone XL Pipeline, it would at least be a stopgap measure to provide oil resources while we search for better renewable resources.

The Keystone XL pipeline is a major oil pipeline that is also known as the Keystone Gulf Coast extension. The Keystone XL is a 1980 mile-long pipeline that if passed, will allow America to be able to transport oil sands crude oil from Hardisty, Alberta, all the way down to Nederland, Texas. Nederland consists of existing terminal, which from there would supply the Port Arthur Texas oil market and Houston, Texas, just 50 miles away. The pipeline is to extend through Canada, running 327 miles from Hardisty, Alberta, then through Saskatchewan upon its entrance into the United States, thus creating jobs for many individuals including Union workers who are currently unemployed ("Keystone XL," 2011).

The Keystone pipeline system expansion is to cost \$13 billion. According to TransCanada, the United States consumes 15 million barrels of oil each day and imports 10 to 11 million barrels per day ("Keystone Pipeline Project," 2011). With the price of oil per barrel

fluctuating from day to day, it is difficult to calculate exactly how much has been spent by the U.S., but according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the U.S. has imported 377,697,000 barrels, which priced at \$75 per barrel would be a total of \$28,327,275,000. With the industry predicting oil consumption staying at this continuous rate for the next few years, little is to be said about the other cost involved in importing this oil to the U.S. from foreign countries. These prices include the cost of fuel during transit, depreciation of the equipment used, labor hours, and most importantly the cost of the lives lost during war (“Petroleum,” n.d.).

TransCanada states that if the Keystone XL is approved, 13,000 jobs will be created while constructing the pipeline and create an additional 7,000 manufacturing jobs while benefiting local businesses that are located along the pipeline route through an increase in business, creating 118,000 “spin-off” jobs for local good suppliers and service providers. The Keystone XL will not only increase jobs, but it will also reduce the number of individuals who are currently taking advantage of unemployment benefits (“Keystone Pipeline Project,” 2011).

Many are opposed to the Keystone XL. The thought of creating a large pipeline across the country creates an opportunity for national disaster. Leaks and oil spill chances are greatly increased, and the effects of spilled oil are life changing for both humans, animals, and our environment. There is also the increased threat of potential terrorism with a pipeline that splits the center of our country full of oil would be a very easy target and could cause extremely dramatic damage to the nation. In addition to the potential danger of oil spills, leaks, and explosions, there is also a potential negative impact on the environment, which could cause dramatic climate changes as well as an increase of pollution.

It is argued whether or not pipelines are the safest way to transport oil as opposed to the current ways we use. Since we are currently importing oil from foreign countries, the use of boats and fuel to power them should be included into the amount of money spent. There is the risk of a ship sinking and threat of oil spilling into our oceans, harming ocean life as well as our ecosystem. This is why it is imperative that we cut off our foreign dependence on oil and utilize the extra money to improve our efforts towards alternative forms of gasoline.

In conclusion, it is an absolute must that we stop importing oil from foreign countries, especially those that could be potential threats to our country. The fact that the country spends about \$28 billion importing petroleum should be enough alone to make the decision a “no brainer.” Even more importantly, we already have oil pipelines running through our country, transporting oil from Canada and Alaska without causing serious ecological problems. Therefore, we should pass the bill to open the Keystone XL, creating jobs and boosting our economy at the same time while saving the excess money spent on importing petroleum from foreign countries. While this measure would not remove our reliance on fossil fuels, it would give us more time to develop alternative renewable energy sources.

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