

American Civil Liberties Union - Montana (ACLU-MT)

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://www.aclumontana.org/en/aclu-montana-position-keystone-xl-pipeline-construction>

Campaign and Advocacy

[Skip to main content](#)

The Keystone XL Pipeline is a 1,200 mile pipeline project proposed by TC Energy, formerly known as TransCanada. The pipeline is expected to transport up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Alberta, Canada to refineries on the Gulf Coast of Texas. The proposed route would cut diagonally through Montana, the borders of North and South Dakota to connect to the Keystone Pipeline in Steele City, Nebraska. More notably, it would transport the dirtiest of fossil fuels directly through critical bodies of water, tribal treaty lands, family farms and ranches before being exported to overseas markets.

Alongside these directly impacted communities, the ACLU of Montana joins in solidarity in opposing the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

We recognize that Indigenous people have been at the forefront of the fight for environmental justice and protection since time immemorial. Tribal Nations and communities are battling every day for the protection of their homelands and survival of ecosystems and ways of life. With no analysis of trust obligations, treaty rights, impact on hunting and fishing rights, water systems, and impact on sacred sights and cultural resources, the United States has failed to protect the rights of Indigenous people.

Further, TC Energy has failed to meaningfully consult with Tribal governments, in a manner that recognizes free, prior, and informed consent. We seek to uphold tribal sovereignty and the rights of Indigenous people to live safely in their homelands and honor the stewardship of Native people as keepers of sacred, cultural, and natural resources.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is a threat to public health and safety. This risky project poses a dire threat to rural and Tribal communities throughout the proposed route. Construction of the pipeline and or a spill from the project would cause irreparable and devastating impact to local communities and ecosystems. The proposed route will cross critical bodies of water that thousands of people across the country rely on for clean drinking water. Should the pipeline leak or spill, which they inevitably do, the pollution and risk will endanger the health and wellbeing of thousands of people. Access to clean water is a human right that should be honored and protected at all costs.

Additionally, construction of the pipeline causes an influx of workers to be housed in man camps that provide many unintended consequences for the wellness and safety of the community. With no assessment of the projects harms, including links between man camps and increased violence against Indigenous women, the government fails to adequately address the social impacts of resource development and how it contributes to the risks and violence faced by Indigenous women and girls.

We are at a time where our world is grappling with the devastating impacts of climate change. Black, Indigenous, and people of color bear the brunt of climate change and are disproportionately impacted by projects such as these. The needs, problems, rights, and voices of Indigenous people are too easily ignored at every stage. We join them in solidarity in their fight against the Keystone XL Pipeline.

[Read about our work to protect the free speech of protestors opposed to the KXL Pipeline.](#)

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