



## **Canceled Oil Pipeline Won't Mean Less Emissions**

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Obama has denied permission to build a pipeline that would have stretched from Canada to Texas.

The Obama administration has denied an application for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, which was to have allowed increased imports of oil from the oil sands in Canada. It says that a congressional requirement that the application be reviewed within 60 days made it impossible to determine whether the pipeline would be safe.

In a statement, President Obama said, “This announcement is not a judgment on the merits of the pipeline, but the arbitrary nature of a deadline that prevented the State Department from gathering the information necessary to approve the project and protect the American people.”

Environmentalists have long opposed the pipeline as a potential danger to water supplies (in the event of a spill). They've also said that increased consumption of oil from the oil sands, made possible by the pipeline, would increase carbon dioxide emissions. But unfortunately it's unlikely that denying the application for the pipeline will prevent these emissions. The oil will likely be delivered to customers elsewhere in the world, or to the United States via other means, such as oil tankers.

The Center for American Progress praised the decision:

[President Obama's] insistence on knowing the impact before the pipeline is approved is the safest decision to protect Americans along its route by ensuring the pipeline won't pollute their air and water before it's reviewed by those with the expertise to conduct such an assessment without bias—not the foreign oil companies or their lobbyists who stand to profit ... Any attempt to prematurely force this pipeline approval ignores the damaging pipeline spills in Michigan, Montana, and elsewhere over the last few years, not to mention the inevitable increase in harmful carbon dioxide pollution.

The **National Center for Policy Analysis** criticized the decision:

“The sad thing is the environment is likely to suffer more if the Keystone pipeline is not built. The Canadian government and the companies involved will build or expand pipelines east and

west, crossing the entirety of Canada as oil is shipped to refineries on America's east coast and west to Canadian ports. The oil will be loaded in tankers—more than doubling tanker traffic—and sent to China and refineries on America's west coast.”

“Tankers are far more prone to spill oil than pipelines—and increased traffic raises the accident risk. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions, which environmentalists claim to be fighting against in preventing Keystone, will be vastly higher due to the increased shipping. This oil will still be produced, delivered, and burned as gasoline and other fuel.

The National Resources Defense Council said, however, that oil sands pipelines are more dangerous than conventional ones:

Tar sands oil is highly corrosive, and pipelines that carry it have proven more prone to spills than those for conventional crude. One tar sands pipeline operated by the same company behind the Keystone XL project experienced 35 leaks in the U.S. and Canada its first year of operation and had to be temporarily shut down by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

And the NRDC noted that the oil from the pipeline may not have been destined only for the United States.

The Keystone XL pipeline would have been an export pipeline. By rerouting tar sands oil out of the Midwest and into the “Foreign Trade Zone” in Port Arthur, Texas, companies could ship it anywhere in the world. Indeed, companies get incentives to export from there.