



## **Keystone XL: Pipeline for dirty tar sands oil**

*The Keystone XL pipeline, proposed by TransCanada, would carry 830,000 barrels of tar sands oil daily from Alberta, Canada to the Gulf Coast.<sup>1</sup> Tar sands have a terrible environmental record as one of the dirtiest oil sources on Earth. The pipeline will endanger nearby people and the climate.*

### **Tar sands are dirty oil:**

- Tar sands oil emits three times more greenhouse gases during production than conventional gasoline.<sup>2</sup>
- About three barrels of water are polluted and dumped in toxic pools (called tailing ponds) for every barrel of oil produced.<sup>3</sup>
- Tar sands extraction requires strip mining huge tracts of pristine forest. An area the size of Florida is slated for extraction.
- The project harms the lives and health of indigenous people living downstream from the tar sands operations and has been connected to high rates of rare cancers, renal failure, lupus, and hyperthyroidism in the area.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Keystone XL pipeline:**

- Replacing the crude oil currently being used by refineries with tar sands oil will increase our greenhouse gas emissions by 30 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. This equals the annual emissions of 5.6 million cars.<sup>5</sup>
- The pipeline will travel more than 1,700 miles through farmland and fragile ecosystems, such as the Missouri River. Pipeline breaks are not uncommon, as evidenced in the last three years in Kalamazoo, MI and Mayflower, AR. In the last decade, there have been over 2,500 pipeline disasters, leading to 161 deaths.<sup>6</sup>
- Refining tar sands oil emits higher levels of mercury and other disease causing air pollutants than conventional oil. In Texas, the communities around these refineries already have unacceptable air quality, according to EPA, and cannot afford more pollution.
- By connecting tar sands oil to the Gulf Coast, the Keystone XL will undermine the clean energy solutions we need to avert catastrophic climate change.

### **The presidential permit: An opportunity for action**

- A Johnson-era executive order requires that the Department of State evaluate all pipeline proposals that cross U.S. borders.
- In 2011, Friends of the Earth uncovered cozy relationships between pipeline proponents and key figures in the Clinton State Department. We also uncovered ties between TransCanada and Cardno Entrix, the firm hired by the State Department to conduct the initial environmental review.
- After Cardno Entrix was dropped in June 2012, State hired another firm to conduct the supplemental environmental impact assessment (Environmental



Resources Management) that also has deep ties to TransCanada and the oil companies that stand to benefit if Keystone XL is built. Friends of the Earth recently filed a Freedom of Information Act request demanding that State hand over correspondence between staff and more than two dozen lobbyists, lawyers and consultants hired by TransCanada and Alberta to push the pipeline.

- The Obama administration has an opportunity to get things right this time by rejecting Keystone XL which is not in the U.S. national interest.

1 State Department website: <http://www.keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/>

2 Charpentier, Alex D., et al. "Understanding the Canadian oil sands industry's greenhouse gas emissions (2009)."

3 Levi, Michael A. "The Canadian Oil Sands: Energy Security vs. Climate Change (2009)." p 11.

4 Nikiforuk, Andrew. *Tar Sands* (2008). Greystone Books. p 89

5 "Cooking the Books: How the State Department Analysis Ignores the True Climate Impact of the Keystone XL Pipeline," p 7.

6 *Assault on America: A Decade of Petroleum Company Disaster, Pollution, and Profit.* National Wildlife Federation. July 2010. **Texas Oklahoma Kansas**

7 Hammond, Ross and Bill Walker. "Keystone XL: Friends of the Earth files for release of State Department records on massive lobbying operations by TransCanada and Province of Alberta" <http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2013-04-friends-of-the-earth-files-kxl-foia-request>