



## Kriss Worthington

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### CONSENT CALENDAR

April 2, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington  
 Councilmember Max Anderson  
 Councilmember Jesse Arreguin  
 Subject: Urge President Obama to Reject the Keystone XL Pipeline

#### RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter to President Barack Obama, urging him to reject the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

#### BACKGROUND

The new Keystone XL pipeline continues to have an enormous number of environmental problems. According to the Sierra Club, the pipeline would not only undermine efforts to combat climate change, but would also pollute freshwater, promote oil dependency, and raise gas prices. If Keystone XL were to be built, the tar sands from the pipeline would release an additional 27 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. (The Sierra Club notes that this is equivalent of adding over 4 million passenger vehicles to the road, or constructing 4 new coal-fired power plants every year.)

Areas near the pipeline with preexisting pollution issues will also suffer from increased emissions. The Sierra Club additionally contends that Keystone XL will not provide nearly as many new jobs as TransCanada claims it will.

Many groups and individuals have condemned this pipeline project: the Sierra Club, climate scientist James Hansen, 350.org, the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Tar Sands Action, and the Center for Biological Diversity have all come out against the proposal. The recent anti-Keystone rallies, staged by Tar Sands Action ([tarsandsaction.org](http://tarsandsaction.org)) and others, were the biggest-ever climate rallies in the US.

The recent rallies in San Francisco, D.C., and other cities around the nation are further proof of massive public opposition to this project's immense environmental damage. This environmental issue is so important that dozens of people, including the President of the Sierra Club, have committed civil disobedience in order to emphasize the serious nature of this very important issue.

In 2011, the Berkeley City Council stood up against the Keystone XL pipeline. This should be done again, via a letter to President Obama urging him to once again protect the land and the people.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Kriss Worthington      510-981-7170

Attached:

1. Draft letter to President Barack Obama.
2. 'Keystone XL 101' flyer, from the Sierra Club

Dear President Obama,

The City of Berkeley urges you to oppose TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline. It's time to stop this dangerous project from coming to fruition.

So many groups and individuals have condemned this pipeline project: today, the Berkeley City Council joins the ranks of the Sierra Club, climate scientist James Hansen, 350.org, the National Resources Defense Council, and Center for Biological Diversity in asking you to please reject the Keystone XL pipeline proposal.

The extraction and transportation process associated with this tar sands oil would produce more carbon emissions than traditional oil. Additionally, an oil spill along the pipeline - which would cut through Montana, South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas - would be potentially disastrous to our environment and our economy, especially since the Keystone XL pipeline would pass over a number of environmentally-sensitive areas. For instance, the pipeline would pass over the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and supplies 30% of our nation's agricultural water.

Approving the Keystone XL pipeline would run completely counter to your administration's commitment to reducing dangerous carbon pollution - and we can't afford to put our communities, our families and our environment at risk. In your most recent State of the Union, you committed to combating climate change; rejecting the Keystone XL pipeline would go a long way towards that commitment, and serve our nation's best interests.

Respectfully,

The Berkeley City Council

## **Keystone XL 101**

The Keystone XL pipeline is the latest proposed tar sands pipeline expansion by TransCanada. This pipeline could bring as much as 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) of costly and polluting crude oil from Alberta, Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast. If approved by the Obama Administration, this pipeline will lock the United States into a dependence on hard-to-extract oil and generate a massive expansion of the destructive tar sands oil operations in Canada.

### **Keystone XL would undermine U.S. objectives to combat climate change.**

- Greenhouse gas emissions from tar sands extraction and upgrading is four to five times more greenhouse gas intensive than conventional oil.
- Replacing conventional crude with tar sands from the Keystone XL pipeline would release an additional 27 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.
- This would be the greenhouse gas equivalent of adding over 4 million passenger vehicles to the road, or constructing 4 new coal-fired power plants every year.

### **Keystone XL would pollute freshwater supplies in America's agricultural heartland and increase emissions in already-polluted communities.**

- The diluted bitumen that Keystone XL would carry is a highly corrosive, acidic, and potentially unstable blend of thick raw bitumen and volatile natural gas liquid condensate that raises the risk of spills and damage to communities along the pipeline's path.
- The U.S. portion of TransCanada's first Keystone pipeline spilled over a dozen times in its first year of operation. A spill from the Keystone XL poses an even greater threat, given that the pipeline would run directly through the Ogallala aquifer, which supplies one-third of our nation's ground water used for irrigation, and drinking water to 2 million citizens.
- Keystone XL would increase emissions in refinery communities in the Gulf Coast, causing further health problems for citizens already bearing the brunt of this industry.

### **Keystone XL would promote oil dependency and harms U.S. security.**

- Shifting U.S. imports from unfriendly to friendly nations like Canada would do nothing to address underlying problems caused by America's oil addiction. Continued reliance on oil empowers all countries that are major oil exporters.
- The Defense Department has said that our addiction to oil is a threat to our national security

### **Keystone XL would provide a route for Canadian oil to be shipped to international markets.**

- Recent evidence suggests that the real purpose of the pipeline is to give tar sands producers access to international markets.
- In its Congressional testimony, TransCanada refused to support a condition that the oil on Keystone XL would be used in the United States.

**Keystone XL would raise gas prices.**

- TransCanada and their partners in the pipeline have admitted that one of the main goals of the project is to raise the price of gas in the Midwest—undermining economic growth and jobs creation throughout the region.
- TC estimates that its ability to manipulate supply with Keystone XL will allow it to charge an additional \$2 - \$4 billion per year from U.S. consumers.

**Keystone XL's job benefits have been greatly exaggerated.**

- The only independent study on Keystone XL's job impacts, produced by the Cornell Global Labor Institute, projected that Keystone XL would have a negative net impact on employment in the United States.
- Keystone XL proponents are using discredited estimates of the project's employment impacts that project that the pipeline will create jobs for dancers, choreographers and speech therapists along the pipeline's rural route.
- The State Department's own study shows that the pipeline's construction will require no more than 6,000 direct temporary jobs and TransCanada itself has said admitted that Keystone XL would require just a few hundred permanent jobs to operate and maintain.

