

### Keystone Pipeline Project Means Jobs, Energy Security

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By Rep. Fred Upton  
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Our nation's energy policy is a matter of both national security and economic certainty. Where we get our energy and at what price have a significant impact on local job creation, American competitiveness and day-to-day costs for Michigan families and businesses. As ongoing tensions around the globe remind us, our energy future is an issue that cannot be taken lightly.

I have long championed a comprehensive "all of the above" energy strategy to meet our nation's growing energy needs and reduce our reliance on overseas oil. Whether developing the vast resources we have here at home — such as oil, coal and natural gas — promoting the advancement of safe nuclear, or harnessing alternative energy sources such as wind and solar, we need it all. It is long past time for Washington to say "yes" to more North American energy and "yes" to job creation by putting a premium back on domestic energy production.

The Keystone XL energy pipeline project calls for the 1,700-mile expansion of an existing energy pipeline from Alberta, Canada, to refineries in the United States. Construction of the pipeline will directly employ some 20,000 private-sector workers and if spin-off jobs are included, could result in more than 100,000 jobs. The added promise of nearly 1 million barrels of oil per day would go a long way to reduce our energy dependence on volatile nations such as Venezuela. What's more, not only will the project be done at no cost to the American taxpayer, it will generate government revenues associated with sales and payroll taxes.

On Dec. 23, President Obama signed into law a bipartisan bill requiring approval of the

Keystone project by Feb. 21, unless he believes the pipeline would not serve the national interest. With millions of Americans still out of work or underemployed, this decision should be a no-brainer.

The United States already imports more of its oil from Canada than Saudi Arabia and Venezuela combined. And because Canada is our largest trade partner, many of those dollars sent to our northern ally are reinvested back here in the United States.

As a private-sector job creator, Keystone enjoys strong support from Democrats and Republicans. The project also has been endorsed by a wide array of groups that recognize the project's untold benefits, including U.S. manufacturers and labor unions that have been affected adversely in our downturned economy. Mark Ayers, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department at the AFL-CIO, said it best: "For America's skilled craft construction professionals, any discussion of the Keystone XL project begins and ends with one word: Jobs."

Not only do we want to see these jobs created, we want those energy resources brought here safely. As Michiganders, pipeline safety is an issue that hits especially close to home. While our nation's 2.5 million miles of pipeline infrastructure remain the safest and most effective mode of transporting essential energy resources throughout the United States, the Enbridge pipeline rupture into a tributary of the Kalamazoo River underscored the unacceptable costs of catastrophe.

As chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have made improving our nation's pipeline safety laws a top priority. Particularly as we look at projects such as the Keystone XL pipeline, we need to make sure it and all pipelines are safe and secure. Last year, I coauthored bipartisan legislation with Michigan Congressman John Dingell — the former Democratic Chair of Energy and Commerce — to hold those responsible for pipeline accidents accountable, while also taking measurable steps to prevent pipeline failures from happening in the first place. I am proud we were able to work together to deliver on this promise and that the president was able to sign comprehensive pipeline safety legislation into law the first week of this year.

As energy demand and production continue to climb, so grows the importance of ensuring the safe transport of these resources. It would be shortsighted and irresponsible to understate the importance of either.

The ball remains in the Obama administration's court to approve the Keystone project, and unfortunately the shot clock is running down. Canada is eager to do business with the United States, but if we continue to needlessly string them along, they eventually will look elsewhere and those jobs will go away.

After years of high unemployment, this project presents a historic opportunity to help turn around our economy and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs at no cost to the American taxpayer. It is a win-win proposition for Michigan and the national interest.

Congressman Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, represents Michigan's 6th Congressional District and serves as Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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