

Top House Democrats on Friday are already downplaying the effects of including the Keystone XL oil pipeline as part of the must-pass payroll tax cut package.

Reps. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) told POLITICO that even if President Barack Obama signed a law requiring him to make a decision on permitting the 1,700-mile pipeline within 60 days, they think he'd still end up rejecting it.

"I think it's shortsighted for the Republicans to force a decision without giving the president enough time to fully consider it," said Waxman, the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. "And if they force him to do that, it'd seem to me, the only logical thing for him to do is to say no to it."

"We expect the president to still reject the commencement of the construction of the pipeline until there is a full completion of an environmental review," added Markey, the top Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee. "The 60-day deadline should not lead to the White House approving the actual construction to begin."

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