

July 2, 2010

Elizabeth Orlando
OES/ENV Room 2657
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Reference: Keystone XL Pipeline Project

Dear Elizabeth Orlando;

Nebraska Farmers Union is a general farm organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life and economic well-being of family farmers and ranchers, and their rural communities. Nebraska Farmers Union was first established in 1913 and represents over 5,300 family farm and ranch families. Many of our members are directly impacted by the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline and have expressed concerns about the unfair treatment of landowners and the potential environmental impacts the construction of this pipeline could bring.

After the public information hearings recently held in Nebraska, our members are more concerned than they were before. The view of our members is that these hearings were long on spin and short on facts. The list of environmental, routing selection, human health, landowner treatment, and environmental concerns were not answered. Instead the list of unanswered questions at this point in the process continues to grow.

Nebraska's Sandhills are a very unique and fragile environmental and geologic formation that sits on top of the Ogallala Aquifer. Landowners and citizens deserve much better information than they have received to date before this pipeline proceeds.

The environmental debacle in the gulf with the yet still flowing oil well should convince government officials at all levels that oil industry experts that work for oil companies do not always have the best interests of our environment as their number one objective. It appears to us that Keystone XL Pipeline is taking an unnecessary shortcut right through our precious Sandhills. Nebraska Farmers Union asks further consideration of several issues prior to granting a Presidential Permit.

1. What is the purpose of the pipeline? Is it really needed?
2. Does the importation of foreign oil fit with the current administrations energy policy?
3. There should be a complete life cycle analysis by EPA, of tar-sands greenhouse gas emissions, climate-risk issues, and sweet crude or other energy alternatives.
4. A comprehensive analysis of the many varied site-specific environmental impacts and considerations involving water crossings, soil types and profiles, livestock and wildlife implications, vegetation and re-vegetation, cultural and paleontological resources, and construction and reclamation, as understood and identified by those people and landowners who will be directly impacted along the path of the pipeline.
5. Are U.S. landowners concerns being represented properly by TransCanada?

Nebraska Farmers Union urges the State Department to take the time needed to properly analyze these questions and the validity of the project prior to issuing a Presidential Permit. The old expression, "Act in haste, repent at your leisure" seems apt in this situation.

Sincerely,



John K. Hansen, President
Nebraska Farmers Union