

# Open Letter to President Obama and Governor Romney: Defend America Against Keystone XL Economic, Public Health & National Security Threat

***“And today, I’m directing my administration to cut through the red tape, break through the bureaucratic hurdles, and make this project a priority, to go ahead and get it done.”***

- President Obama, speaking about the southern leg of Keystone XL in Cushing, OK (March 22, 2012)

***“If I’m president, we’ll build it if I have to build it myself.”***

- Governor Romney, commenting on the Keystone XL pipeline in Pittsburgh, PA (May 4, 2012)

Dear President Obama and Governor Romney,

As candidates for president, you both support construction of the southern (OK-TX) leg of Keystone XL, a pipeline that would transport tar sands through the Great Plains from Montana to refineries in Texas.

We call on you to withdraw your support for this project in light of the overwhelming evidence, available to both of you, that Keystone XL threatens America’s economy, public health, and national security.

You both know about the poor safety record of [Canadian pipeline companies](#) and the [economic danger](#) Keystone XL poses to our nation’s food and [water supplies](#). TransCanada’s Keystone I tar sands pipeline, built two years ago, leaked corrosive tar sands slurry [12 times in its first 12 months](#). In 2010, a similar pipeline run by [another Canadian company](#) spilled more than [1 million gallons](#) of toxic tar sands into Michigan’s Kalamazoo River, sickening hundreds of people, displacing homeowners, wrecking businesses, and destroying jobs. Keystone XL – which would pump tar sands at extreme pressure and temperature across nearly 2,000 U.S. waterways – promises more of the same by allowing for leaks of up to [1.7 million gallons daily](#) without triggering a real-time leak detection system. It is not a matter of if, but when, TransCanada’s 1,700-mile tar sands pipeline will compromise America’s breadbasket by [contaminating](#) our Great Plains rivers and aquifers.

You have been informed by [twenty](#) prominent scientists – including one of the nation’s top climate experts, Dr. James Hansen – that Keystone XL “*would practically guarantee extensive exploitation*” of Canada’s tar sands, which “*on top of conventional fossil fuels will leave our children and grandchildren a climate system with consequences that are out of their control.*” You have also been warned by [Dr. Hansen](#) – who along with other scientists links [deadly heat waves](#) to climate change – that such exploitation would mean “*game over for the climate.*” As far back as 2007, an elite [Military Advisory Board](#) of 11 retired three- and four-star generals and admirals from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps concluded that “*climate change is and must be recognized as a threat to our national security.*” Echoing this sentiment, Vice Admiral Lee Gunn, USN (Ret.), president of the bipartisan [American Security Project](#), testified in 2009 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that taking this national security threat “*head on is about preserving our way of life.*”

Rural families living in the path of the proposed pipeline are sounding the alarm of impending disaster. Please listen. You need to both stop hiding behind the few thousand [temporary construction jobs](#) this project would create and level with the American people. The facts show that Keystone XL:

- **Risks [destroying more jobs](#) than it creates**
- **Portends [higher, not lower, gas prices](#) for the Midwest and Rockies**
- **Functions as an [export pipeline](#) for Canada to sell its oil to foreign markets**
- **Threatens to further [poison the air](#) of people living near tar sands oil refineries**
- **Violates [tribal sovereignty](#) and tramples on [private property rights](#) of U.S. citizens**
- **Jeopardizes the [Ogallala Aquifer](#), source of 1/3 of America’s farmland irrigation water**
- **Endangers the [Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer](#), which supplies water to more than 10 million Texans**

Keystone XL violates so many core American values, it can only be described as un-American. It is time to stop playing politics with American lives and treasure and stand up to energy giant TransCanada. Failure to confront this foreign corporation seeking to enrich itself at our expense is a failure to defend America.

Believe in America! Forward! America’s path to prosperity lies in the rapid transition to abundant homegrown [renewable energy](#) and appropriate [biofuel](#) resources to power our homes, businesses, and vehicles – not in facilitating pipelines transporting the most destructive oil on earth. Keystone XL represents a retreat from the green economy, which already employs [2.7 million workers](#) (more than the fossil fuel industry). Embrace instead a U.S.-led green industrial revolution that will move our economy forward, create millions of new jobs, and help ensure a livable planet for future generations.

In solidarity with families in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana dedicated to nonviolently resisting TransCanada’s toxic pipeline, we are urging everyone we know to challenge you on the campaign trail – between now and Election Day – until you commit to defending America against this imminent threat to our economy, public health,

and national security. We expect you to protect our basic rights to clean air, food, and water, and to put the health, safety, and economic well-being of the American people before foreign corporate interests.

Show us, in the tradition of great Americans who came before you, that you are leaders worthy of the American presidency by courageously standing firm in defense of the land, and planet, we love. Inspire us by sharing a bold vision for the future that is befitting the American people – one marked by innovation, ingenuity, and hope. Seize this historic moment to leave a legacy that will be honored by our children and generations to come.

Sincerely,

David E. Alessi (Longmont, CO)  
Paul Alexander (Altamont, NY)  
Harvard Ayers, Chairman, Arctic Voices (Boone, NC)  
Vicki Baggett, Nacogdoches County S.T.O.P. (Nacogdoches, TX)  
Lois Barber, Executive Director, EarthAction (Amherst, MA)  
Paul Bassis, Strategist (Boulder, CO)  
Jonny BearCub, Enrolled Member, Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Nation (Wolf Point, MT)  
Ed Begley, Jr., Actor/Activist (Studio City, CA)  
Robert & Kristine Bernt, Affected Landowners/Owners, Clear Creek Organic Farms (Spalding, NE)  
Michael & Kathi Bishop, Affected Landowners (Douglass, TX)  
Brent Blackwelder, President Emeritus, Friends of the Earth\* (Washington, DC)  
David Blittersdorf, CEO, AllEarth Renewables, Inc. (Williston, VT)  
Catherine Bock (Palo Alto, CA)  
Rodney M. Bordeaux, President, Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Rosebud, SD)  
Rene Braud (Houston, TX)  
Lester Brown, President, Earth Policy Institute (Washington, DC)  
Lynda Buoy, President, Sand Hills Region, Nebraska Farmers Union\* (Bassett, NE)  
Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network (Washington, DC)  
Lt. Dan Choi, Iraq Combat Veteran (New York, NY)  
Karl Connell, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Newport, NE)  
Kevin Connell, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Newport, NE)  
Gabriel Cordova, Affected Landowner (Winnsboro, TX)  
Julia Trigg Crawford, Affected Landowner/Farmer (Direct, TX)  
David Daniel, Affected Landowner/President, Stop Tarsands Oil Pipelines (Winnsboro, TX)  
Ari Daniels, CMT/Member, Tar Sands 1253 (Charlottesville, VA)  
Steven & Kathy DaSilva, Nacogdoches County S.T.O.P. (Nacogdoches, TX)  
Mary Decker, Stop Tarsands Oil Pipelines (Jacksonville, TX)  
Edgar DeMeo, President, Renewable Energy Consulting Services, Inc. (Palo Alto, CA)  
Christin Engelhardt (Washington, DC)  
Brock Evans, President, Endangered Species Coalition\* (Washington, DC)  
Eleanor Fairchild, Affected Landowner (Winnsboro, TX)  
Ernie Fellows, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Mills, NE)  
Paul Ferguson, Former Chairman, Arlington County Board\* (Arlington, VA)  
Terry Frisch, Affected Rancher (Atkinson, NE)  
Bruce Gagnon (Bath, ME)  
Robert Gern, DrPH (Alpharetta, GA)  
Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director, Indigenous Environmental Network (Bemidji, MN)  
Benjamin Gotschall, Energy Director, BOLD Nebraska (Hastings, NE)  
Tom Gray, Executive Director (81-89), American Wind Energy Association\* (Norwich, VT)  
Natalie & Floyd Looks for Buffalo Hand (Pine Ridge, SD)  
Daryl Hannah, Actress/Activist (USA)  
James Hansen, Adjunct Professor, Columbia University Earth Institute (New York, NY)  
John Harter, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Winner, SD)  
Ken Haukaas, Economic Development Advisor, Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Rosebud, SD)  
Paul Hawken, Author (Sausalito, CA)  
Randy Hayes, Executive Director, Foundation Earth (Washington, DC)  
Mariel Hemingway, Oscar Nominated Actress/Author/Conservationist/Mother (Malibu, CA)  
Harlan Hentges, Executive Director, Center for Energy Matters (Edmond, OK)  
Joe Hickey, Founding Board Member, Tierra Madre, LLC\* (Lexington, KY)  
Julia Butterfly Hill, Co-Founder, What's Your Tree\* (Albany, CA)  
Reah Janise & Hadan Kauffman (Washington, DC)  
Sheryl Kampf (Cincinnati, OH)  
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Julie M. Kramer (Boulder, CO)  
Sheryl Lee, Actress/Species Protection Activist (Los Angeles, CA)  
Gussie Lehman (Hyattsville, MD)

Alec Loorz, Founder, Kids vs. Global Warming (Ventura, CA)  
 Victoria Loorz, Executive Director, Kids vs. Global Warming (Ventura, CA)  
 Susan Luebbe, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Stuart, NE)  
 Marti Matsch, Communications Director, Eco-Cycle\* (Boulder, CO)  
 Becky Mayo, Nacogdoches County S.T.O.P. (Nacogdoches, TX)  
 John Mayo, Landowner Rights Alliance (Nacogdoches, TX)  
 Holly McClelland, Owner, Clementine Studios, Inc. (Boulder, CO)  
 Becky & Sam McCoy, Affected Landowners (Winnsboro, TX)  
 Bill McKibben, Founder, 350.org (Ripton, VT)  
 Peggy Miller, Owner, Highland Winds (Missoula, MT)  
 Kayla Mohnsen, President, Students for Environmental Action, KSU (Manhattan, KS)  
 Brenda Morgan, Nacogdoches County S.T.O.P. (Nacogdoches, TX)  
 Suzanne Morris, Nacogdoches County S.T.O.P. (Rusk, TX)  
 Leilani Mürter, Carbon Free Girl, Race Car Driver/Environmental Activist (Charlotte, NC)  
 Cindy Myers, RN (Stuart, NE)  
 Daniel K. Peddie (Boulder, CO)  
 Lori Peddie (Holland, MI)  
 Mike Petersen, Executive Director, The Lands Council\* (Spokane, WA)  
 Tom Poor Bear, Vice President, Oglala Lakota Nation (Wanblee, SD)  
 Caleb Post, Affected Landowner (Winnsboro, TX)  
 Edward C. Radillo, USAF (Ret), DOD (Ret), Stop Tarsands Oil Pipelines (Yantis, TX)  
 Bonnie Raitt, Musician/Activist (Los Angeles, CA)  
 Mark Reynolds, Executive Director, Citizens Climate Lobby (Coronado, CA)  
 Eric W. Ringsby (Aspen, CO)  
 Betty & Joe Scott, Affected Landowners (Winnsboro, TX)  
 Paul Seamans, Affected Landowner/Rancher (Draper, SD)  
 Ron Seifert, Spokesperson, Tar Sands Blockade (Missoula, MT)  
 Casey Sheahan, CEO, Patagonia (Carbondale, CO)  
 Tara Sheahan, CEO, Conscious Global Leadership (Carbondale, CO)  
 Tom "Smitty" Smith, Texas Director, Public Citizen (Austin, TX)  
 Stefanie Penn Spear, Executive Director, EcoWatch/President, Expedite Renewable Energy (Cleveland, OH)  
 Byron Steskal, Affected Landowner/Farmer (Stuart, NE)  
 Kieran Suckling, Executive Director, Center for Biological Diversity (Tuscon, AZ)  
 Andrea & Steve Taber (San Anselmo, CA)  
 Rebecca Tarbotton, Executive Director, Rainforest Action Network (San Francisco, CA)  
 Dennis & Teri Taylor, Affected Ranchers/Owners, D&T Cattle Company (Newport, NE)  
 Brad Thacker, Board Member, Be The Change U.S.A. (Lakewood, CO)  
 Cleve Trimble, MD (Valentine, NE)  
 Adrian F. Van Dellen, DVM & CEO, The Neches River Watershed Sentinels (Woodville, TX)  
 Rev. Roger W. Verley, H.R., National Capital Presbytery (Annandale, VA)  
 James A. Walker, Former President, American Wind Energy Association\* (Henderson, NV)  
 Harvey Wasserman, Editor, NukeFree.org/Author, SOLARTOPIA! (Bexley, OH)  
 Dan Weis, Realtor (Mason, OH)  
 Gerald R. Weis, DC (Naples, FL)  
 Tom Weis, President, Climate Crisis Solutions (Boulder, CO)  
 Leslie Weise, Principal, Cleantech Business Solutions (Monument, CO)  
 Alex & Debra White Plume, Oglala Lakota (Pine Ridge, SD)  
 Robert Paul Williams, Hollywood Stuntman/Olympic Athlete/Extreme Outdoor Adventurist (Malibu, CA)  
 Chris Wynnyk Wilson, Stop Tarsands Oil Pipelines (Austin, TX)  
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 Daniel Ziskin, President, Jews of the Earth (Boulder, CO)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Affiliation listed for identification purposes only