



Ecological Society of America  
1990 M Street, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036

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January 23, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Ecological Society of America (ESA), I would like to thank you for your decision to postpone construction of the Keystone XL pipeline until the environmental review process being undertaken by the state of Nebraska and the State Department is completed.

ESA, the professional membership organization of 10,000 ecological scientists, has not taken a position on the merits or detriments of any eventual proposed route, particularly given the fact that the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and TransCanada have yet to come to agreement on a concrete proposal for the State Department to review. We do however, request that any such decision follow the longstanding precedent of proper environmental assessment and scientific review to which this administration and previous administrations have adhered.

While the process of approval for the pipeline has been ongoing for years, it was only recently (Nov. 22, 2011) that the Nebraska governor signed LB 4, a law that, according to NDEQ, "provides new responsibilities to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality relating to supplemental environmental impact statements involving oil pipelines." This new law voids a previously proposed route and mandates collaboration through the National Environmental Policy Act, between federal and state entities in the development of a new route for the Keystone XL pipeline.

Congress's mandated 60-day approval, as set forth in P.L. 112-78, does not account for the bipartisan concerns of Nebraskan officials that the original proposed path of the pipeline would align with the Nebraska Sandhills, which surround the aquifer that provides most Nebraskans' water supply. The provisions outlined in the Nebraska law make it improbable that a comprehensive environmental assessment can be completed in such a short period.

The administration's decision to allow TransCanada to reapply for a permit after it develops a new route is a sensible and prudent action. Such a significant policy decision should be informed with a thorough scientific assessment and input from federal, state and local stakeholders.

If ESA can be of any assistance as this process moves forward, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steward T. A. Pickett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S" and a prominent "P".

Steward T. A. Pickett  
President  
Ecological Society of America