

Before One Inch of the Keystone XL is Laid in Nebraska Soil

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Governor Heineman said, "... I am not opposed to pipelines. We already have hundreds of them in our state. I am opposed to the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline route because it is directly over the Ogallala Aquifer. "

How much clearer can the governor be? Since he wrote that letter to the president on Aug. 31, 2011, we all know the route has changed. Now it crosses even more miles of the aquifer than it did before! And, the governor is being asked to make a decision on the new route in the next 30 days.

Heineman's letter goes on to say, "Maintaining and protecting Nebraska's water supply is very important to me and the residents of Nebraska. This resource (the Ogallala Aquifer) is the lifeblood of Nebraska's agricultural industry. Cash receipts from farm marketing contributes more than \$17 billion to Nebraska's economy annually. I am concerned that the proposed pipeline will potentially have detrimental effects on this valuable resource and Nebraska's economy."

Well governor, the federal government also has those same concerns. The new Pipeline Safety bill, passed by unanimous consent in both the U.S. House and the Senate, calls for a one-year study on the corrosiveness of DilBit, the type of oil that will flow through the Keystone XL. The new law also requires a two-year study on leak dejection.

How could Heineman possibly approve the route before these two studies are completed in 2013 and 2014, followed by a review process and the new regulations are in place to better protect Nebraska citizens, which Heineman says is very important to him?

The same is true of President Obama who signed the new Pipeline Safety bill. Both Heineman and Obama must wait until the studies are complete before this project goes any further.

To approve it now would send a clear message to families, villages and towns along this route. It would tell them money from a foreign corporation is more important than the safety of our citizens and the preservation of one of the world's greatest wonders, the Ogallala Aquifer.

Right now, Gov. Heineman should neither approve nor disapprove this new route. He should come out and say he is unwilling under any circumstance to put fellow Nebraskans in danger or jeopardize the state's economy, which is highly reliant on the aquifer. He should wait until everything that can be done is done, as a result of these two pending and extremely critical federal studies.

There is yet another independent study unfinished, as is outlined in his own Department of Environmental Quality final report on page 3-41 which is studying the oil spill risk assessment. Heineman should wait for its completion too.

What governor would put his or her citizens and the state's economy at risk by approving this pipeline before all the facts from the federal and state studies are in? Is our governor willing to sell out our safety for a few pieces of silver?

If this is allowed to go through, sure there will be some temporary employment, but according to the DEQ summary report, once the pipe is in the ground and the construction process has moved out, there will be 15 jobs needed for operation and monitoring activities.

That's it folks, 15 jobs and a little property tax revenue after the dust settles.

That's what Nebraska gets out of this. And at what price? How much is a pure Platte River worth? How much is the Ogallala Aquifer worth? What happens when it spills, and it will spill. Even TransCanada admits that. When it does, TransCanada stockholders will have their money at risk, not their lives and livelihoods.

Governor, do what you know in your heart is the right thing for Nebraskans. If you love this state like you say, then delay your decision. When all the studies are in, and the new regulations for safety are in place in 2015, and TransCanada checks off on all the new requirements, then and only then should you make a decision.

But for now governor, make sure you, as the highest elected official in our state, do everything in your power to first and foremost protect our citizens and resources. Let this process unfold as it should before one inch of that pipe is laid in Nebraska soil.