

The Keystone XL Tar Sands Pipeline Will Hurt More than Help Job Creation

The total number of jobs the Keystone XL Pipeline would create is far lower than those touted by pipeline proponents. According to the State Department, the pipeline would create 35 permanent full-time jobs¹ and 1,950 construction jobs that would last for two years.² The recent claim that Keystone XL would create 42,000 jobs is based on theoretical estimates of all short-term, indirect effects of spending by the much smaller number of people who would be directly employed.

Keystone XL would likely have negative impacts on job creation. A spill would be detrimental to the agriculture industry and cleanup efforts would be costly. Keystone XL would also undermine the expansion of the clean energy sector, which has proven to be more effective at job creation than the fossil fuel industry.

A tar sands spill from Keystone XL would threaten jobs

In the event of a major pipeline spill, Keystone XL could cost thousands of jobs along its route and require high cleanup expenditures. A study from the University of Nebraska has found that Keystone XL would likely experience 91 major pipeline spills over the project's 50-year lifespan.³

Keystone XL would threaten the agricultural sector, which directly employs more than 500,000 people in the states the pipeline would traverse and which generates billions of dollars in revenue.⁴ 79 percent of the land that would be affected by Keystone XL is agricultural and rangeland.⁵ The pipeline would also run through the Ogallala Aquifer, which supplies 30 percent of the groundwater used for irrigation in the U.S.⁶ Cleaning up tar sands oil spills is both difficult and costly, as witnessed following spills into the Kalamazoo River and in Mayflower, Arkansas.

Keystone XL would impede the growth of the clean energy sector

Business owners have argued that Keystone XL would impose nearly \$100 billion in climate-related costs on the economy.⁷ In addition, Keystone XL would undermine the growth of the clean energy sector. The American Sustainable Business Council, representing more than 200,000 businesses across the country, has called on the administration to reject the pipeline.⁸

The clean energy sector is more conducive to job creation than Keystone XL would be. In the third quarter of last fiscal year, 18,000 new clean energy jobs were created nationwide.⁹ Investments in clean energy create four times as many jobs as the same amount of investment in petroleum-based projects.¹⁰

¹ U.S. State Department, Keystone XL Final SEIS, January 2014, p. 4.10-31.

² U.S. State Department, Keystone XL Final SEIS, January 2014, p. ES-19.

³ John Stansbury, *Analysis of Frequency, Magnitude and Consequence of Worst-Case Spills From the Proposed Keystone XL Pipeline*, Nebraska Water Center, 2011, <http://watercenter.unl.edu/downloads/2011-Worst-case-Keystone-spills-report.pdf>.

⁴ Lara Skinner & Sean Sweeney, *The Impact of Tar Sands Pipeline Spills on Employment and the Economy*, Cornell University Global Labor Institute, 2012, https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/globallaborinstitute/research/upload/GLI_Impact-of-Tar-Sands-Pipeline-Spills.pdf.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Environmental Entrepreneurs, *Letter to Secretary Kerry*, March 7, 2014,

<http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/aswift/E2%20Letter%20Opposing%20the%20Keystone%20XL%20Tar%20Sands%20Oil%20Pipeline.pdf>.

⁸ *Business Leaders Call on Senate to Reject Keystone Pipeline*, American Sustainable Business Council, November 18, 2014, <http://asbcouncil.org/news/press-release/business-leaders-call-senate-reject-keystone-pipeline#.VKwRumTF-BI>.

⁹ Environmental Entrepreneurs, *Clean Energy Works for Us: Q3 2014 Jobs Report*, 2014, http://cleanenergyworksforus.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014_Q3_Report_final.pdf.

¹⁰ Robert Pollin et al., *Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low-Carbon Economy*, Political Economy Research Institute, 2008, http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/peri_report.pdf.