

Gary Marx
1831 Toyon Way
Vienna, Virginia 22182

November 27, 2007

Dustin M. Johnson, Chairman
Public Utilities Commission
REFERENCE HP07-001
State of South Dakota
500 East Capitol Street
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070

Dear Mr. Johnson and Members of the Commission:

More than 100 years ago, my great grandparents moved to Kingsbury County. They farmed and grazed the land. So did my grandparents and parents. As a boy and young man and as a South Dakota 4-Her, so did I. From the very beginning, that land was more than just a resource to be exploited. It was then, and is today, a source of sustenance and one of our remaining environmental treasures.

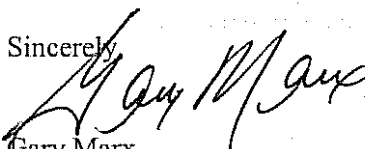
When I first heard about the TransCanada Keystone Pipeline project in a stark and unsigned announcement of intention, I was struck by a sense that someone simply wanted to exploit the land—anything for a profit. I was, in fact, puzzled why this type of project, if necessary in the first place, had to come across South Dakota. Then, I was struck by the fact that this pipeline could be built within existing right-of-way, such as I-29. When I read in the November 16, 2007, issue of the Mitchell *Daily Republic* that some landowners actually were put on notice by the PUC that they had to defend their opposition to the project, I began to wonder whether something has been “worked out” with the commission in advance of any hearings.

Consider this. Those who express concern that the pipeline will be a scar on the face of South Dakota land make an important point. From possible leakage to ongoing access, they are legitimately concerned. When people discuss the need to develop and use alternative sources of energy and reduce our dependence on petroleum, they are seriously thinking about the future. When they consider what happens when economic growth is not balanced with environmental sustainability, they have an understanding of possible consequences of the Three Gorges Dam in China and of the seemingly never-ending stretches of rusting pipe that littered the landscape when parts of the Texas oil patch ran dry. The source in this project will also run dry or the product will become so expensive that only the richest among us will be able to afford it. The “public,” represented by the Public Utilities Commission, has an important case as it questions the viability and appropriateness of this pipeline. You will, undoubtedly, receive assurances that the company hoping to install this pipeline will fulfill every requirement. Those assurances are easy to compose in well-crafted PowerPoints. However, it is the realities that South Dakotans would have to live with for decades and even centuries to come that should matter most.

I would suggest that the PUC consider how it might attract the scientists and the industries needed to develop new sources of energy and propulsion. That would be an act of leadership, and it would be an investment that would pay off, not only for South Dakotans but for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Gary Marx