

## American News

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## Our Voice

# TransCanada should provide protection bond

**I**t's better to be safe than sorry.

That old axiom just makes sense when it comes to asking TransCanada to post a multi-million dollar bond to protect against damages in case of an oil pipeline leak in South Dakota.

TransCanada officials say the company's sophisticated monitoring system for detecting and responding to leaks will prevent major harm to land, water or crops.

Many people in South Dakota are skeptical.

The land is the livelihood of many, many people in this state. The risk of its contamination, or the contamination of the water supply, is there. No one really denies that. There is a risk. The controversy comes in with the question of just how sizable that risk really is.

Pipeline proponents say, "Don't worry, the risk is minimal."

But what if it's not?

The answer to that question is this: If a spill happens, both TransCanada and South Dakota need to be prepared. There needs to be a plan in place. Safety and environmental consultants hired by the Public Utilities Commission to review the project say there are holes in the plan, but that the complete plan must be filed at least 30 days before operation of the pipeline begins.

There also need to be appropriate financial resources to address both the problem and the people affected by it.

Asking for a bond to protect the public from the "what if" factor isn't at all uncommon. In July, the state Board of Minerals and Environment decided to increase the environmental-protection bonds for the Wharf Resources gold mine in the northern Black Hills. Wharf's reclamation bond, intended to cover the costs of restoring the land if necessary, was increased by more than a quarter million dollars to \$10,966,400.

In April 2006, that same board approved a \$110 million plan from Homestake Mining Company. The plan was designed to protect the environment — for the next 100 years — from any possible harmful aftereffects of the mining that ended in 1998 at the site in Lead.

It just makes sense to give the land through which the TransCanada pipeline would run that same sort of protection.

We're not suggesting discontinuing the pipeline project, but we need to proceed with caution. TransCanada should be open to the suggestion of providing protection bonds for the land through which the pipeline runs. Doing so would certainly ease the concerns of landowners, likely making life a bit easier for the TransCanada officials who are trying to get this particular pipeline built.

TransCanada should provide South Dakota a protection and restoration bond for the pipeline area.

It's better to be safe than sorry.

