

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Markup of H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act
April 16, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This is not the first time Congress has debated a pipeline project held captive by federal red tape despite its great potential to create jobs and increase the supply of North American energy. Forty years ago, we faced a very similar situation with the Alaska pipeline. It took an act of Congress to break the bureaucratic impasse, limit the litigation, and achieve the Alaska pipeline's construction, and now we must do the same for Keystone XL. H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act, will end the needless delays and finally allow construction of this landmark jobs and energy infrastructure project.

The Alaska pipeline project was mired in lengthy bureaucratic delays, but after Congress enacted the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act of 1973, the project swiftly moved forward and soon created tens of thousands of good-paying jobs at a time of high national unemployment. The Alaska pipeline was a game changer for U.S. energy policy, and to date, it has delivered over 16 billion barrels of oil to the American market and has amassed an excellent environmental and safety record. Although the warnings of the 1970s never materialized, some of the same activist groups that opposed the Alaska pipeline have resurfaced, still peddling the stale warnings of doom and gloom from four decades ago.

The Alaska pipeline bill was an acknowledgment by Congress that the environmental review process it created had strayed from its purpose, and was being used to jeopardize a project clearly in the national interest. Congress never intended for the National Environmental Policy Act to become a backdoor means of stopping major projects through a process of paralysis-by-analysis, but we see this again with Keystone XL. The State Department has already produced 15,500 pages of documents in its NEPA review of Keystone. This review is now entering its fifth year, there is no clear end in sight, and the delays have enabled opponents to mobilize for a lengthy fight in the courts.

We can look to our past and to the Alaska pipeline as a reason to approve Keystone, but this project is really about our future. Keystone is an opportunity to create jobs and expand our supplies of affordable and reliable North American energy. The goal of North American energy self-sufficiency is within reach, and there are plenty of factory workers, pipefitters, welders, laborers, electricians, and others ready to create the infrastructure for it. A labor union official put it best last week when he testified, "this project is not just a pipeline; it is in fact, a life-line."

There is no reason for the administration to continue dragging its feet on this jobs and energy project. In 2010, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she was inclined to approve the pipeline. Almost two years ago this subcommittee met to mark up Lee Terry's original bill to build Keystone. We moved that legislation through the House with a strong bipartisan vote of 279-147 in July 2011, but the administration told us that they would not support the bill because they were already committed to "reaching a decision before December 31, 2011." The president last year declared that he'd do "whatever it takes" to create U.S. jobs. But now here we are in April 2013, four-and-a-half years after Keystone's application was first filed, and the administration has yet to approve this project. It's time for Congress to act and get this pipeline built. H.R. 3 is the first step toward a brighter energy future and I urge all of you to vote for it.

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