

Congressman Steven Daines (MT)
Statement
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade

“Keystone’s Red Tape Anniversary: Five Years of Bureaucratic Delay and Economic Benefits Denied,” (9/19)

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you about the importance of the Keystone XL pipeline construction to my state of Montana. As the lone Representative from Montana who was just elected last year, many things I have witnessed in Washington have shocked me. The fact that we are sitting here, 5 years after an approval process was initiated for the construction of Keystone XL, and we’re still waiting is astounding. This is a prime example of what’s wrong with Washington. It took Canada only 7 months to approve this pipeline— President Obama and Washington bureaucrats have taken 5 years, and we still don’t have an answer. I am here today to tell you that Montanans are tired of the gridlock and ready for this pipeline to be approved.

The President’s inaction and the bureaucratic delays have created uncertainty about whether or not my state will get to reap the benefits of this pipeline—and let me tell you. The benefits of the Keystone are plentiful in Montana.

Over the past few years, small towns in the eastern part of Montana have been revitalized, due to the exploration and production of oil in the Williston Basin. In Montana, energy development means better opportunities for employment, more revenue flowing into state and local government coffers for schools and roads, and economic growth and jobs for our communities. The Keystone pipeline—which is set to run directly through the eastern portion of Montana— will be no different.

I am honored to represent Montana which shares a 500 mile border with Canada. Our state is known for its abundance of natural resources and I could not think of a better place for the Keystone XL to initiate its route into our country.

The proposed pipeline would cross into the U.S. through Phillips County in Montana. The pipeline will cross through 5 other counties in our state. As the pipeline passes through, more than 800 good-paying jobs in Montana will be created and thousands more across the nation. This economic development will mean better schools, stronger infrastructure throughout our state. Besides creating economic opportunity for hundreds in Montana, the pipeline takes us one step closer to North American energy independence, with up to 830,000 barrels of oil per day transported by the pipeline. That’s about half the amount that the U.S. presently imports from the Middle East.

And of the oil moved each day, 100,000 barrels will come from my part of the world—the Bakken formation, which spreads across Montana and North Dakota.

The Keystone pipeline also means cheaper energy costs for Montana families, Seniors, and small businesses. NorVal, an electric cooperative in northeastern Montana, will supply power for one the of pipeline’s pump stations. If Keystone is built, they estimate that they can keep their consumer’s electric rates steady for the next ten years. However, if the pipeline is not approved, rates for consumers will increase by 40 percent. That’s potentially an increase of about \$480 dollars per year for the average household in Montana.

In Montana, resource development and the jobs it creates comes hand-in-hand with a responsibility to ensure the environment we treasure is there for future generations. Protecting our environment, while creating jobs through the responsible development of our resources, is our only option.

The pipeline has undergone four environmental reviews, with one more finalization of the review yet to come. Report after report indicates the pipeline will have no significant impact on the environment. In fact, when compared to other means of transportation, it is perhaps the most environmentally friendly way to transport oil across our country.

These days in Washington, it's hard to find many measures Republicans and Democrats agree on. The Keystone Pipeline's bipartisan support should be telling. In my home state of Montana, both of our Senators—Max and Jon—support the pipeline's construction.

This is common sense. Montanans support the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline and are ready to move.

Why are we still waiting?