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Nebraska's Workers Need Keystone XL

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The Keystone XL pipeline has attracted a great degree of controversy, especially here in Nebraska. While concerns over any project of this size are to be expected, there are some important facts that have been lost in the debate.

At a time when our country desperately needs new jobs, Keystone XL would put thousands of Americans back to work. In fact, construction of this pipeline would help create more than 100,000 construction jobs in the United States, resulting from direct and indirect business activity.

Since 2006, we have trained more than 400 Nebraska residents to be pipeline workers. We recently opened a new training facility in Omaha to continue and expand this work into a regional facility drawing trainees from neighboring states. The Keystone project will employ these workers right here in Nebraska, with a construction workforce of over 1,500. These jobs will provide family-supporting wages, healthcare, and retirement benefits for Nebraska workers that are sitting on the bench waiting to contribute to our economy.

Economic benefits for Nebraskans also would be significant. Keystone XL would generate an additional \$10 million in new state and local tax revenues. Tax payers and residents along the route would also see lasting gains, as facilities constructed to support Keystone XL are estimated to generate more than \$152 million in property taxes to local governments over their lifetime. These tax revenues are delivered to rural areas of the state where they can help fund schools and provide essential services through local units of government.

In addition to the thousands of new jobs for Nebraskans that Keystone XL would generate, the state would also see more than \$450 million in new economic activity. In the current economy and with so many Nebraskans struggling to make ends meet, this activity and the work that would come with it are real jobs and real wages that would make a real difference.

As for environmental impacts, there are strong concerns that the pipeline would be unsafe and ruin the delicate Sand Hills region that we Nebraskans rightly cherish. These

concerns, however, are not supported by the facts.

Pipelines are the safest form of transportation for oil, and a pipeline shipping oil resources from Canada to Texas refineries is certainly a better option than relying on tankers to ship oil through sea lanes, many from unfriendly regimes around the world. Keystone XL would be no exception.

In fact, the State Department's own environmental analysis - which addressed concerns from Nebraskans and incorporated input from the EPA, the Department of Energy, the Office of Pipeline Safety within Department of Transportation, and a range of other environmental experts - concluded that Keystone XL would "have a degree of safety greater than any typically constructed domestic oil pipeline system under current regulations." The analysis also found "no spill incident scenario" where the Ogallala Aquifer system would be negatively affected, and that all alternative routes would increase impacts.

Hundreds of Nebraskans were added to the unemployment rolls last month, and the need for new infrastructure projects in Nebraska and across the country has never been higher. It's time to stop the fear mongering and start helping struggling Nebraskans get back to work.

It's time to move forward with Keystone XL.



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