

Keystone XL Pipeline Begins Construction

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It has been several years since [TransCanada](#) proposed their plan for the Keystone XL Pipeline. In 2005, they planned to spend \$1.7 billion to build a 3,000 km pipeline from Alberta to Illinois in order to transport synthetic crude oil. Three years later, they announced their plan to expand the pipeline an additional 3,200 km to end at Texas refineries. This \$8 billion project is expected to transport approximately 590,000 barrels of oil each day.

In 2010, U.S. citizens, environmental groups and politicians began to realize the harmful impacts this project may have on the surrounding environment, including pollution to air and water supply and physical harm to wildlife. In 2011, TransCanada agreed to re-route the pipeline in order to avoid the Nebraska Sandhills and the Ogallala Aquifer, two of the most controversial areas the original route would have crossed.

Although this project has yet to receive full approval, President Obama recently announced his plan to accelerate the pipeline's southern portion as part of his "all of the above" strategy. As a result, construction of the Keystone Pipeline began August 9th near Livingston, Texas.

Locals quickly began to protest, as the pipeline is designed to carry diluted bitumen, a heavy black tacky oil, from the tar sands of northern Canada to refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast. Known as the [Tar Sands Blockade](#), these environmental activists plan to participate in organized demonstrations in which participants sit in the path of construction equipment and link arms.

In order to cross the Canadian/U.S. border, TransCanada must receive approval of the Presidential Permit application, which they anticipate for early 2013. If all goes according to plan, they predict an operating date of 2015. Citizens across the country must continue to wait and see if the Keystone XL Pipeline will finally get approval. Only time will tell what sort of impacts it will have on our economy and environment.

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Sarah Battaglia

[Energy Curtailment Specialists, Inc.](#)

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