

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

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today, this subcommittee embarks on its first markup of the 113th Congress. Much like the last Congress, the nation still faces unacceptably high unemployment rates and gasoline prices, which is why approving the Keystone XL pipeline expansion project makes more sense than ever. I urge all of you to support H.R. 3, the “Northern Route Approval Act,” which gives this important pipeline its long-overdue green light, and I would like to thank my friend Lee Terry for his tireless efforts on behalf of this bipartisan bill.

As I mentioned in our hearing last week, the Keystone pipeline has become a household name. At this point we are all familiar with the benefits of this project that would bring more Canadian oil to Midwestern and Gulf Coast refineries. The estimated 20,000 direct and 100,000 indirect jobs alone would likely make it a more successful jobs program than any project in the \$800 billion dollar stimulus package or any other job-creating effort the president currently has in the works. And unlike federal job programs, Keystone XL won’t cost a penny of tax dollars.

In addition, the project would increase the supply of oil and help moderate the future price of oil in this country, which should come as welcome news to Americans struggling through the third straight year of gasoline prices well above \$3.00 a gallon.

And while the reasons for approving Keystone XL get stronger, the reasons for further delays get weaker. Most significantly, the intra-state dispute over a portion of the route through Nebraska has been resolved, and we can now count Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman among the many who want construction to begin.

It is worth noting that Keystone XL is probably the most extensively studied pipeline project in history, having already undergone one full round of NEPA review that took nearly three years and is currently stuck in another round of environmental review. And the most recently updated Environmental Impact Statement from the State Department once again gives the project a clean bill of health.

It has become clear that the administration and opponents of Keystone XL would like nothing more than to engage in what is a seemingly endless stream of analysis followed by waves of litigation from environmental groups. No person can claim with a straight face that what we are doing today is somehow “rushing” the process. H.R. 3 will end the farce that the approval of this pipeline has become.

We need to fight back against these excuses, not just for Keystone XL itself but for America’s economic and energy future. My colleagues and I on this side of the aisle have a vision for America’s energy future – one where we continue to strive for self-sufficiency and maintain diverse energy resources. Keystone XL is just the first of many energy projects that are going to be part of the North American energy renaissance. Thanks to American innovations and entrepreneurs willing to take risks, we are unlocking vast reserves of energy. The goal of North American self-sufficiency is within reach, but America can’t reach its potential so long as Washington continues to stand in the way.

This is much more than a debate about one pipeline. As significant as the jobs and energy from Keystone XL itself are, this bill is nothing less than a referendum on America’s energy future and whether we will embrace that future. That is why I urge all of you to support H.R. 3.

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