



**For Immediate Release:** June 18, 2015

## **Groups Urge President Obama to Reject Enbridge's Illegal Alberta Clipper Tar Sands Scheme**

*A letter from 63 national, regional, and local groups demands that the tar sands pipeline project be held to the same standard as the proposed Keystone XL*

Washington, DC — In a letter sent to President Obama this morning, 63 environmental, tribal, and faith groups called for a full environmental review of the proposed Alberta Clipper tar sands pipeline expansion, expressing serious concerns about the project, which threatens land, water, and climate and tramples on tribal rights.

The groups urged the president to hold the project to the same legally required review process as Keystone XL, and to reverse a decision made by the State Department last year to illegally allow Canadian oil giant Enbridge to use a backdoor scheme to increase the amount of dirty, climate-polluting tar sands flowing through the Great Lakes region.

The full text of the letter and list of signers is below:

**Indigenous Environmental Network \* Energy Action Coalition \* Sierra Club \* Minnesota Conservation Federation \* Science and Environmental Health Network \* Wica Agli \* [350.org](http://350.org) \* Minnesota Environmental Partnership \* Bold Nebraska \* Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Division \* Native Lives Matter Coalition \* Sierra Club Nebraska Chapter \* 350 Madison \* InterAmerican Clean Energy Institute \* Center for Biological Diversity \* Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice \* Sierra Club Kansas Chapter \* Ocean Conservation Research \* Earth Day Network \* Sierra Club Missouri Chapter \* Women's Earth and Climate Action Network \* The Rachel Carson Council, Inc. \* The Center for the Celebration of Creation \* ForestEthics \* WildEarth Guardians \* Idle No More San Francisco Bay \* Leave it in the Ground Initiative \* Oil Change International \* Foundation Earth \* MN350 \* Earthjustice \* International Forum on Globalization \* Northland Sustainable Solutions \* Physicians for Social Responsibility \* Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation \* Alaska Wilderness League \* Amazon Watch \* Rachel's Network \* For Love of Water \* Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis \* Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement \* Rainforest Action Network \* Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds \* National Nurses United \* Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light \* 350 Kansas City \* Sierra Club John Muir Chapter \* Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands \* Zumbro Valley Audubon Society \* Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense \* 350 Kishwaukee \* West Athabasca Watershed Bio-regional Society \* Greenpeace \* Mawinzo Asiginigaazo \* Voices for Progress \* Environment America \***

**Chesapeake Climate Action Network \* Sierra Club North Star Chapter \* Natural Resources Defense Council \* Interfaith Power and Light \* Friends of the Headwaters \* Honor the Earth \* League of Conservation Voters \***

June 18, 2015

President Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

**Subject: Environmental Review of the Enbridge Alberta Clipper Pipeline Expansion**

Dear President Obama:

We applaud your Administration's commitment to combating climate change. On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we thank you for ongoing efforts to prioritize what we believe is the most pressing issue of our time. To that end, we also look forward to an imminent rejection of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned by the State Department's recent authorization of pipeline company Enbridge's plan to dramatically increase the amount of tar sands they are importing across the border via their Alberta Clipper and Line 3 pipelines. Enbridge's plan allows them to blatantly skirt environmental reviews that even the State Department has previously said were necessary.

In 2012, Enbridge announced plans to nearly double the amount of tar sands crude oil it brings across the border on its Alberta Clipper pipeline, from 450,000 bpd to 800,000 bpd. Pumping this increased amount of tar sands crude under higher pressure would increase the risk of a tar sands spill in the Great Lakes region and would jeopardize important regional water resources, including the headwaters of the great Mississippi River. This increased pipeline capacity would also trigger more development of destructive, high-carbon tar sands fuel. Therefore, the State Department correctly determined that it must evaluate these and other environmental impacts before deciding whether to allow Enbridge to expand Alberta Clipper's flow of tar sands crude into the country.

Alberta Clipper and Line 3 also run directly through the 1855 Treaty Territory where indigenous and tribal members live and work. This territory is used by tribes for hunting, fishing, and gathering. Native plants, including wild rice, animals, and sites within the territory traditionally have been important to members of native tribes for subsistence, spiritual, medicinal, and other purposes. The territory is also used for other important tribal spiritual and cultural practices. Tar sands expansion would put all of these tribal resources at risk.

For the above reasons, the State Department correctly determined that it must evaluate these and other environmental impacts before deciding whether to allow Enbridge to expand Alberta Clipper's flow of tar sands crude into the country.

Rather than wait for this requisite environmental review and permitting process to run its due course, Enbridge decided it would immediately increase the flow of Alberta Clipper by diverting the oil onto an adjacent pipeline for the actual border-crossing, then diverting the oil back to Alberta Clipper just south of the U.S.-Canada border. Enbridge claimed that the

Department's permit for the adjacent pipeline, Line 3, which was built in 1968 without *any* environmental review, does not contain express language limiting its capacity.

Unfortunately, in early 2014, State Department staff acceded to this scheme following several closed-door meetings with Enbridge.

The Department has both the authority and obligation to reverse this decision. The Department should not be complicit in an interpretation designed to attack its own authority and undermine its review process. Rather, the Department must stand by the environmental review that it indicated was legally obligated when this expansion was first announced, and prevent Enbridge from moving forward until that full review process is complete. Failing to do so would compromise the presidential permitting process, would limit public input and transparency around this process, and would undermine the Administration's expressed commitment to addressing climate change.

It is the duty of your Administration to decide whether cross-border tar sands pipelines are in the national interest, and you have made clear that you take that duty seriously. The State Department simply cannot allow Enbridge to dictate the outcome based on a back-door scheme to avoid full review. The Alberta Clipper expansion must be held to the same national interest and climate standards as the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

We therefore call on the State Department to withdraw its back-room approval of the Alberta Clipper expansion, and complete its ongoing environmental review of the project before allowing any more climate-polluting tar sands crude oil to be imported.

Sincerely yours,

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Honor the Earth

Gene Karpinski  
President  
League of Conservation Voters

Cc: U.S. Secretary of State, John F. Kerry