

Testimony of Bruce Burton
International Representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical
Workers
Before the Energy and Power Subcommittee of the House Energy and
Commerce Committee
Washington, DC
December 2, 2011
“Expediting the Keystone XL Pipeline: Energy Security and Jobs”

Good morning Chairman Whitfield, Ranking Member Rush, and members of the committee.

My name is Bruce Burton. I am an International Representative at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). On behalf of the approximately 725,000 members of the IBEW, I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Keystone XL Pipeline project.

As an electrician who began his apprenticeship in 1981, I have very distinct memories of members of my local union telling stories about their work on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Members of my local union, located in Michigan, spent months working on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline which covers 800 miles and carries oil from the North Slope of Alaska to Valdez, Alaska.¹ Over the 3 year span of the project, approximately 70,000 jobs were created.² Depending on the season, between 2,000 and 4,500 individuals remain employed on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline today.³ IBEW members from

¹ <http://alyseka-pipe.com/pipelinefacts.html>

² *Id.*

all across the United States were able to save their homes during this rough economic time because they were able to work on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

The IBEW's primary concern in our nation's energy debate is jobs. Like the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline of 35 years ago, the Keystone XL Pipeline Project would create jobs and help our members through this difficult economic time. In his letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton requesting approval of the Presidential Permit necessary to build Keystone, IBEW President Edwin D. Hill wrote:

“At a time when job creation should be the top priority, the Keystone XL Pipeline project will put Americans back to work and have ripple benefits throughout the economy. The shovel-ready pipeline would create 20,000 direct jobs and 118,000 indirect jobs. IBEW members look forward to being part of this historic project and pledge to deliver the highest quality work to make it a success.”⁴

Our highly skilled, trained, and licensed journeyman electricians, linemen, apprentices, and instrument control technicians would be working on Keystone's pump stations which would move oil through the 1,700 mile-long pipeline.⁵ The pump stations are to be located approximately 50 miles apart and built on small parcels of land – approximately 5 to 10 acres.⁶ Each pump station contains between 2 and 5 pumps which

³ Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, *Alaska Native Program – Section 29 Designated & Reporting TAPS Contractor Employment Guide*, 2010, p. 1.

⁴ Letter from IBEW President Ed Hill to Secretary of State Clinton dated October 28, 2011.

⁵ TransCanada, IBEW to Provide Skilled Workers for Keystone XL, October 18, 2011.

⁶ *Id.*

are electrically driven by 6,500 horsepower high-voltage motors.⁷ Initially, our members would be working on 15 pump stations with the potential for 15 more stations in the future.⁸ Each station would require approximately 6,000 electrical labor hours to complete.⁹

In addition, many of the pump stations are to be built in remote locations. Therefore, new high-voltage transmission lines must be built in order get electrical power to the stations. For example, in Nebraska a new transmission line that would need to be built would be 74 miles long and carry 115,000 volts.¹⁰ This “project within a project” is valued at \$49 million and will provide approximately 55,500 hours of labor for linemen.¹¹

Just like the benefits from the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline, the benefits from the Keystone XL Pipeline will not be localized. From pipe manufactured in Arkansas, pump motors assembled in Ohio and transformers built in Pennsylvania, to the men and women who will actually work on the pipeline itself, workers from all over the United States would benefit from the project.

The Keystone XL Pipeline would be built under a Project Labor Agreement with the IBEW, the Laborers International Union of North America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada, the International Union of Operating Engineers and the Pipeline Contractors Association.¹² Only the

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Testimony of John Bourne before the Nebraska State Judiciary Committee.

¹¹ *Id.*

highest skilled workers will be employed on the project. This will ensure the most well-built, safest pipeline possible.

Today, the United States is experiencing the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The Keystone XL Pipeline project is shovel-ready. As soon as a Presidential Permit is granted, jobs would be created – jobs that our country – jobs that our members desperately need.

I thank you for your time and look forward to your questions.

¹² <http://www.transcanada.com/5493.html>