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Bold Nebraska  
Expediting the Keystone XL Pipeline: Energy Security and Jobs  
December 2, 2011  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

Thank you Chairman Whitfield and Members of the Committee for asking me to be with you today on an issue that has captivated our state for the past several years. My name is Jane Fleming Kleeb, and I am the head of a nonprofit advocacy group called Bold Nebraska.

Hearings like today give us, citizens, an opportunity to not only thank you for your dedication to our country but also to ask for your help. President Obama made a tough and right decision by asking for more time to study this pipeline. He stood up for our families and landowners who have been bullied by TransCanada. I am asking you to also stand with us as we figure out a path forward.

Our broad coalition of individuals and groups speaking out against the pipeline has become much more than just a coalition working on an issue. We are now a family doing everything we can to protect our land and water. We are defending the heritage of our state.

Some will try to say because we passed two bills last month on oil pipelines that everything is fine in Nebraska. Everything is not fine. TransCanada has yet to propose a new route that will avoid the Sandhills and our precious Ogallala Aquifer, landowners are still on pins and needles knowing the easements TransCanada owns can be sold today to another oil pipeline company, and we have not even started the new state-based process to study this pipeline.

Simply put, we are looking to our elected officials, each of you and those back home, to do right by landowners like Randy and Susan, and to do right by small businesses like Lucky Bucket, a local brewing company that relies on the clean and abundant water from the Ogallala Aquifer, and Clear Creek Organics which relies on the intricate ecosystem of the Sandhills for their products. These small businesses produce jobs and tax revenue as well as excellent beer, cheese and meat.

With the TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline, it is all too easy to turn this into a jobs vs. environment issue. We believe this pipeline represents much more than one energy project and endangers much more than any amount of jobs that TransCanada or their allies claim it will produce. We have seen figures ranging from 3,000 to 1 million jobs related to the pipeline. Whatever the real figure is, I stand with President Obama and Nebraskans who know we must figure out a

way to create jobs while protecting our land and water.

This pipeline is risky. It is massive, and we literally have no long-term study on how tar sands affect land, water or our health. We have seen first hand in Michigan, with the awful tar sands spill in the Kalamazoo River, how much more difficult and expensive it is to clean up tar sands and the chemicals mixed with this type of oil. Families have been displaced and the oil is sticking to the bottom of the riverbed. This is not traditional oil that floats and can be skimmed with booms. We owe it to workers, our families, the environment and our water to do the right study to get us the answers we need.

I am asking for your help in getting a study on how tar sands affects our land, water and health. We need clarity on if traditional pipelines, designed to carry conventional oil, can safely carry corrosive tar sands especially since we have seen 14 spills in the past year on TransCanada's Keystone 1 when they told us we would see 11 leaks over the lifetime of the pipe.

While the permit process may seem like it is taking too long, we still have no proposed route in Nebraska and no study on how tar sands affects our land, water and health. Additionally, if this oil is meant for the United States, then please make an agreement stating as much. Pass a bill saying the oil is for US consumption. It is hard to rationalize how a pipeline carrying oil across our nation to an unknown final destination can be in our national interest. We all know TransCanada and other tar sands companies need to get their oil to various ports in order to sell it to the highest bidder. In the end, we assume all the risks and none of the rewards.

Yes, the process has taken a long time. It has been over three years since TransCanada started to contact landowners and threaten eminent domain even though they had no permit for their project, three years of threats from a powerful international company. Our state has been bombarded with misleading ads about the amount of jobs and money this pipeline would bring to our state. We will soon be releasing a report that shows how little in taxes TransCanada actually has paid to our counties compared to their promises.

Just because you create jobs, does not give you the green light to take American land for your private gain. That is what TransCanada is doing. In South Dakota at least six American families are in court fighting eminent domain right now to protect their land. Families in Nebraska are ready to do the same. Never did I think, in our country, a foreign company could take land for their private gain through eminent domain, a process already controversial but a process we think should be left to "public good" projects, not projects that are for private financial profit.

As a nation, we are facing our next moon challenge. Energy is our moon challenge. I want to look at my three little girls and tell them that I'm doing everything I can to ensure our energy is sustainable, that our energy is helping revitalize our communities not destroy them, and that our energy is safe.

The TransCanada pipeline simply does not meet the challenge. It sets us on a path backward, not forward. We do not need to figure out ways to approve this pipeline. We need to figure out ways to ensure our land and water are protected as we look to our moon challenge and as we, together, figure out solutions for our country's energy and job needs without risking our land and water.

We can meet this challenge. We are Americans and nothing can stop us from coming together to make tough decisions, to do right by landowners and to finally get on a path to energy independence.