

Prepared Testimony of Jerome Ringo

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My name is Jerome Ringo. I am the Chief Business Officer for Bard Holdings, an algae cultivation, harvesting and extraction project that is creating advanced technologies to replace oil.

My thanks to the Chairman, the Ranking Member and members of this committee for inviting me to speak today on this most important subject.

After twenty-five plus years of working in Louisiana's petro-chemical industry (all as a member of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union), thirteen years as a board member of the National Wildlife Federation, seven years heading the Apollo Alliance (a 17 million member alternative energy coalition) and currently with Bard Holding, I would like to offer a long-term perspective on America's energy choices.

Understanding America's growing appetite for energy and our need for economic stimulation, it is important that we meet this energy demand with smart choices that grow our economy with as minimal adverse impact as possible on the safety of the water, air and lands we depend on. In fact, American workers have proven again and again that we can create jobs by pursuing the environmentally smart path forward.

I clearly recognize the jobs impact of construction projects. But sometimes, the best intentions can deliver negative results. If we look only at the short-term impacts of the Keystone XL Pipeline, we may pay a heavy price in the long term. President Obama got it right when he said we need to take the time to understand the impacts of this project and not rush to build.

The obvious destruction and contamination of northern Canada, along with the safety challenges, health and environmental risk to the American people of such a pipeline, is enormous. NASA scientist James Hansen has warned that expansion of Canadian tar sands is a

“game over” scenario for extreme climate change. The environmental justice impacts on communities surrounding Gulf refineries have never been adequately examined.

The Keystone XL pipeline will transfer highly corrosive and toxic tar sands oil under high pressures along more than a thousand miles, crossing waterways and sensitive aquifers and jeopardizing the quality of life of citizens along its route.

Transcanada and the State of Nebraska have agreed to move a small part of the Keystone XL pipeline. I am not reassured, however, because I now wonder what part of America are we are willing to sacrifice next to a spill of this magnitude.

According to the State Department’s final Environmental Impact Statement, a spill from this pipeline could reach a worst-case estimate of 2.8 million gallons. If we pay attention to what is happening in Michigan, we can see the consequences, because it just happened. Last year, a similar pipeline spilled more than a million gallons of tar sands oil into Michigan’s Kalamazoo River. The River is still closed today, ruining drinking water, harming the health of nearby residents and killing wildlife.

EPA recently announced that it has already recovered more than 1.1 million gallons from the Kalamazoo River and that there is no end in sight to the cleanup because tar sands oil is far more difficult to clean up than conventional oil. We have no idea how much oil was really spilled because Enbridge pipeline company assured EPA that the spill was less than a million gallons.

As we continue our dependency on foreign oil, with a goal to declare energy independence, it is critical that we not shift our dependency from the Middle East to Canada. Our goal is to not switch seats on a sinking ship.

The middle ground answer lies in creating jobs to meet America's energy demand, while simultaneously improving the state of our environment and our economy. The answer lies in increased investment in the research and development of cleaner alternative energy projects – this is win-win-win on jobs, national security and environment.

And that clean fuel strategy is real, powerful, and underway right now.

The new fuel economy standards recently enacted and proposed for cars and trucks, together, cut America’s need for oil by 3.4 million barrels per day – that’s more than 3 times the proposed capacity of Keystone XL. Or, put differently, that equals oil savings greater than the proposed KXL pipeline plus all the oil we currently import from the Persian gulf.

Innovating to build more efficient and alternative fueled vehicles is underpinning a renaissance in auto and manufacturing sector that according to bureau of labor statistics data, has added more than 125,000 direct jobs in auto and parts sales in the past 24 months. At least 300 companies in 43 states are building alternative and efficient vehicle technology today. The money consumers

save driving more fuel efficient vehicles is projected to add an additional 400,000 jobs nationwide in coming years.

Energy investments are long-term investments. We need to think long-term.

I urge Congress to put the long-term interest of the American people as its top priority and not rush to build the Keystone Pipeline.