

Against the Ecocide in Canada and the Keystone Pipeline project: Ten Tragedies, a Call to Action and an Appeal to People of Faith!

1. **The pipeline will increase the price of gasoline in the United States, perhaps as much as 50 cents/gallon.** This will cause great social and economic hardship. The pipeline will move oil from Cushing, Oklahoma to refineries and harbors on the Gulf of Mexico. Because of increases in North American oil production, oil at Cushing is priced at \$10-15 less than the world price. With increased capacity on pipelines going south, the US cost for oil will equalize to the world price. That means higher prices at the pump.
2. **The Keystone pipeline facilitates ecocide.** It will transfer of the Canadian tar sands liquified bitumen product (dilbit) to the Gulf. This project can only be described as a criminal ecocide. Unlike conventional oil production which drills wells with a relatively small footprint, the Canadian tar sands are strip mined. This involves the complete destruction of the surface ecosystem. Two tons of oil sands must be mined to produce one barrel of oil.
3. **An area the size of England is at risk of ecosystem destruction.** If fully exploited, the Canadian tar sands will destroy 57,000 square miles of pristine Canadian boreal forest, together with all of the animals, birds, and fish that get in the way of this industrial exploitation of the Canadian wilderness. The largest dam in the world is in northern Alberta and it impounds a giant lake of toxic sludge mining byproducts that continues to poison the water, land, and winds.
4. **The tar sands mining system consumes fresh water and pollutes it forever.** It takes three to five gallons of fresh water to produce a gallon of oil from the tar sands. Billions of gallons of water will be destroyed by this process. Every day, three million gallons of polluted toxic waste leaks into the Athabasca River and contaminates ground and surface waters downstream.
5. **The energy returned on energy invested (EROEI) of the end product is low.** The mining effort consumes 600 million cubic feet of natural gas every day. It is estimated that the final EROEI of tar sands oil is less than 6. That is, it produces only six times as much energy as required for its production. This estimate is likely optimistic. It does not include the energy losses embodied in the destruction of the surface ecosystems of the area and the costs of reclaiming the land, if that is ever actually attempted large scale by the tar sands corporations. For comparison, Wikipedia reports the EROEI of conventional oil production at 20 (this number has been declining as oil production and exploration has become more energy and money intensive).
6. **The tar sands corporations and the Canadian government trample on the rights of the indigenous communities of the area.** Downstreamers are experiencing high rates of cancer that some public health authorities believe may be linked to the tar sands industrial effort. Hunting and fishing areas are being polluted and wildlife killed or driven away. Plans are afoot to push pipelines and tanker trucks through indigenous lands over their protects.

7. **The project is murdering birds, animals, and fish.** Wildlife at risk include the woodland caribou, gray wolf, black bears, Canadian lynx, sandhill cranes, wall-eye trout, and moose. Caribou herds are in steep decline, down 70% over the last ten years. Less than 300 remain alive and the species is expected to be extinct in the area before 2040.
8. **The oil sands production is a pitiful return for the effort and destruction. It's** equal to about 1.32% of world oil production. This is a shameful “30 shekels of silver” for betrayal of our stewardship of these lands. Like Judas, we will bitterly regret our decision to allow this to happen.
9. **I don't believe in the good faith of the oil sands corporations or the Canadian government when it comes to repairing their destructions.** The oil corporations are technically required by Canadian law to reclaim the land after their mining operations are finished, but to date less than ½ of 1 square mile, of the hundreds of square miles of forest the corporations have destroyed, has actually been reclaimed.
10. **Oil sands crude oil is 22% more carbon intensive than conventional crude oil.** The mining, production, and consumption of the tar sands oil will drive up global warming emissions. Just this week, the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere passed 400 ppm. Because of our greed and gluttony, our children are at risk of environmental degradation and a climate gone wild.

The Call to Action

Drive less. Walk, bicycle, carpool, take mass transit more. The ecocide in Canada and the pipeline across America are driven by our own demands for fossil fuel transportation. The situation won't change by simply wishing things were different. We must begin to live as though the natural environment was important, because it is. Our continued existence on this planet depends on healthy, functioning ecosystems. Our gluttonies and greeds are driving our nation at 75 miles per hour towards the ash heap of history. We should stop before it is too late.

Do your part to help build a society and an economy where it is easier to do good, and harder to do bad, towards Creation. A good start would be to create more diverse and comprehensive systems of transportation, including the legalization of a freer market for non-governmental small scale transportation alternatives like jitney and small van/bus cooperatives and enterprises. Always vote against politicians who do not actively support a freer transportation market and who do not appropriate a fair share of public funds for mass transit projects.

Join the resistance. Get involved with the local groups in your area that are organizing opposition to the Keystone Pipeline and the Tar Sands Resistance. Come out for demonstrations and acts of public witness against the pipeline construction. In years to come, when your children or grandchildren ask, “What did you do during the pipeline and tar sands crises,” you don't want to say, “I stayed home and did nothing.”

The Appeal to People of Faith

At the time of my baptism, God gave me the right – and the responsibility! – to act against evil wherever it may be found.

The Canadian tar sands ecocide and this pipeline are plots of destruction and greed set in motion by the demons who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Every gallon of fossil fuel our lifestyles consume damages the Body of Christ manifested in God's holy Creation. This is a moral issue. There is no resolution without our individual, personal acknowledgment of our own individual responsibilities for supporting the system. Now is the time to stop making excuses for our sins against Creation and to start doing radical penance and acts of reparations! This is the day that the Lord has made, as we reform your ways and manners of living! All people can stop doing what is evil that destroys God's holy Creation and start doing all good that heals and repairs. As the Apostle Paul reminded us in ancient times, "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now is the time for people of faith to stand for what is right and to oppose all that is evil in this Canadian ecocide and the Keystone pipeline crusade against God's glorious – and holy – Creation.

I call upon all people of faith, wherever you may be, in your own ways, to pray and fast for an end to the ecocide in Canada and the Keystone Pipeline Project. May our deeds unite with our prayers to join with God in creating a future of hope, peace, and justice for all.

If your faith tradition honors the intercession of saints, call upon St. Kateri Tekawitha, Lily of the Mohawks, as the patron of this cause. A novena to St. Kateri for this purpose is found at <http://www.justpeace.org/kateripipelinenovena.html>.

May God who Creates, Redeems, and Sustains be with us in this time of our grave need.

I am, Your little brother,

/sig/

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On the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, 2013