

From: [Public Relations Division](#)
Subject: Legion reaffirms support for oil pipeline
Date: Thursday, February 6, 2014 9:10:09 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legion reaffirms support for oil pipeline

Keystone XL project is a positive step for national security and economy alike, says national commander.

WASHINGTON (Feb. 6, 2014) -- The \$7 billion Keystone XL pipeline project would reduce America's reliance on middle eastern oil suppliers, provide jobs for veterans and improve national security, American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said today as arguments against the proposal are fading.

"We have never wavered in our favor of the Keystone XL pipeline project," said Dellinger, leader of the nation's largest veterans' service organization. "Keystone XL will bolster national security and the national economy alike. There can be no reasonable objections to it remaining."

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Department issued a final environmental study for the proposed expansion, which would transport Canadian oil through the heart of America to a hub in Nebraska and on to refineries at the Gulf of Mexico. The report largely negates arguments made by those who oppose the project on the basis of environmental impact. President Obama has said he would support the project only if environmental concerns were allayed.

"The development of Keystone XL would have two primary effects that are of particular interest to The American Legion," Dellinger said. "Expansion of our existing oil supply route from our neighbor and ally, Canada, would strengthen national security by lessening our dependence upon foreign oil sources. The more self-sufficient we are, the stronger we are.

"Secondly, the building and maintenance of Keystone XL would provide jobs - many jobs," Dellinger added. "Some of those jobs, naturally, would go to qualified, disciplined, hardworking and dedicated military veterans. But employment created by the Keystone XL would not only decrease the veteran unemployment rate, but overall national jobless numbers. No cogent argument can be made against either of these benefits."

Two American Legion resolutions were passed in 2012 supporting the Keystone XL pipeline project.

Resolution No. 207 (<http://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/2096>), points to continued reliance on foreign energy sources and consequent compromises to national security as reason enough to move on the project. The resolution "call(s) upon Congress and the President to expedite the approval and construction of a pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and other points as a step toward greater U.S. energy independence along with allowing the development of all viable energy resources."

Resolution No. 300 (<http://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/2167>), declares that "The American Legion, in order to increase American energy self-sufficiency, promote the creation of 20,000 jobs, and improve the stability of the American economy, strongly recommend(s) the permitting, construction and operation of the pipeline; and, urges all segments of the U.S. government (to) pursue and grant all required permits necessary for the construction of the proposed pipeline without further delay."

The Canadian government has been actively campaigning on behalf of the Keystone XL pipeline project as well. A highly visible poster campaign was launched in Washington recently, promoting the strong and friendly relationship between the United States and Canada, the No. 1 oil exporter to the United States.

On a webpage devoted to the proposed pipeline expansion, the Canadian government argues that "the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline will have the capacity to transport 830,000 barrels per day (bpd). Approximately 525,000 bpd of Canadian oil sands crude could ultimately be transported via KXL. TransCanada has indicated that up to 25 per cent of KXL's capacity would be utilized by tight, light oil from the Bakken Formation, which is located in Montana and North Dakota, further contributing to U.S. energy security.

"KXL furthers our countries' long history of cooperation," the website text continues, "by increasing the existing transport of Canadian and American crude to U.S. refineries, creating jobs and ensuring energy security for both our countries. Canada is already the largest oil supplier to the U.S. - in 2012 delivering 3 million barrels of crude and petroleum products per day, more than Saudi Arabia and Venezuela combined."

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