



Interfaith Power & Light

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Clergy in Path of Pipeline Urge President Obama Reject Keystone XL on Moral Grounds

As court decision creates new obstacle, religious leaders voice opposition

SAN FRANCISCO – Faith leaders in the path of TransCanada’s proposed Keystone XL pipeline are joining colleagues across the country to urge President Barack Obama to reject the project in order to curb carbon emissions and protect God’s Creation.

“This is an issue of justice,” said Pastor Kyle Childress, whose Austin Heights Baptist Church lies 15 miles from the pipeline. “TransCanada is running over people, destroying God’s earth, and pouring out climate-changing carbon, all in the name of short-term profit – and expecting our communities to shoulder the burden.”

More than 150 clergy members have joined some 4,000 people of faith in signing a letter asking the president to stop the pipeline’s construction, adopt clean energy technologies and policies that will lead a global clean energy movement. Some of those faith leaders joined a telephone press conference today to mark the letter’s release.

“As people of faith, we share your conviction that we are commanded by God to care for our planet and that the failure to respond to the threat of climate change would betray our children and future generations,” the letter says, referring to the president’s State of the Union address.

The letter — penned by Interfaith Power & Light, a leading religious voice on climate change — coincides with the close of the State Department’s last public comment period before the Administration makes a decision on the Keystone XL pipeline. It would carry oil from Canadian tar sands through the United States to refineries in Texas.

Last week, in a move that could further delay the beleaguered project, a Nebraska judge ruled the law giving the governor pipeline siting authority illegal. The judge also declared "null and void" the law's permission to TransCanada to claim

landowner's property in the path of the pipeline on the basis of eminent domain, which is normally used by the government to take private property for public use.

"The people of Nebraska love their land and have made their voices clear: stop the TransCanada pipeline," said Rev. Kim Morrow of First-Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. "We must protect the Ogallala Aquifer and the sensitive Sandhills region of our state. Our ranchers and farmers have been affronted by the bully tactics used to try to seize land that has been in their families for generations. This pipeline holds no benefits for Nebraska, and instead just risks jumping from the frying pan into the fire with climate change."

Clergy members across the country agree.

"People of faith have a responsibility to preserve God's gift of clean air, water and land," added the Rev. Sally Bingham, president and founder of Interfaith Power & Light. "The Keystone Pipeline is too great a risk to that call to be gardeners. We were put in the garden to till and to keep. This dangerous pipeline jeopardizes the health of the garden and all living things. We find it sinful that financial gain is being considered more important than preserving the air, water and land for future generations. In other words, that money can trump moral responsibility."

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Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) is a national organization with 40 state affiliates reaching 15,000 congregations advocating for climate protection, clean energy, and stewardship of Creation.