United Transportation Advisors Monthly Newsletter

JULY | AUGUST
2011

Smear campaign distorts pipeline issue

It's been a busy few days since Nebraska hosted its U.S. State Department meetings on the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. Federal officials concluded their public hearings; State Sen. Annette Dubas of Fullerton introduced legislation to require state approval for large oil pipelines; and, not to be outdone, three national environmental organizations filed a lawsuit against the Obama administration over construction of the project.

Unfortunately, we've seen these tactics used many times before. Anti-oil advocates have a long history of launching overstated or completely unfounded attacks in opposition to U.S. pipeline projects.

With this perspective, it becomes clear that a large portion of the most visible attacks on the Keystone XL project represent this style of activism and aren't a reflection of the quality of the project itself.

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"Green" Red Herrings in Pipeline Debate

Recent attention drawn to email exchanges between the Obama-Biden administration and TransCanada representatives by anti-development activists represents nothing more than a red herring in the Keystone XL Pipeline debate. In fact, this kind of sleight of hand is nothing new—it seems to be a core strategy of opposition activists, who have already made several attempts to derail the project by distorting the facts.

For example, while protestors point to Keystone XL's proposed crossing of the Ogallala aquifer as good cause to reject the pipeline, they neglect to mention there are over thousands of miles of pipeline already crossing the aquifer. Yet, little state or national attention was directed to the planning and construction of these oil and gas pipelines. Why? Because decades of experience and review demonstrate that the risk to the environment from our 2.1 million miles of pipelines is minimal. So why is so much attention being given to a state-of-the-art pipeline like Keystone XL?

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