

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We are aware of reports that the leadership of the House of Representatives is attempting to include provisions that would short-circuit the legally required environmental review process for the proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline in a legislative package to come before Congress prior to the end of this year. We write to strongly oppose this effort by House leadership.

At a time when the State Department Inspector General is conducting a special review of the State Department's handling of this proposed pipeline, it is completely inappropriate for the leadership in the House to seek a legislative rubber stamp approval for the Keystone XL pipeline. In a decision supported by President Obama, the State Department decided to delay a determination on the pipeline in order to conduct a supplemental environmental impact study. The House legislation would eliminate that supplemental environmental study, require approval of the project within an arbitrary 30 day timeframe, and shift the approval authority to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission which has not been involved in the review of the project to-date. The legislation would also set a troubling precedent by removing the State Department from its responsibility for review of pipelines crossing international borders.

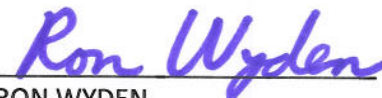
We support the President's decision to delay a determination on this project to allow time for an additional environmental review. We also believe it is necessary and appropriate to wait for the results of the Inspector General's review prior to any further determination on Keystone XL. Based on our serious concerns about this pipeline project, and the very real need to further examine its impacts, we strongly oppose the inclusion of provisions that require approval of this pipeline in an arbitrary timeframe in any legislative package moving forward in the Senate.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter.

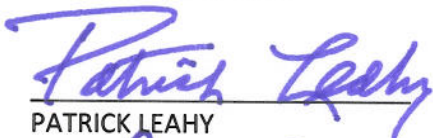
Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator