

# TransCanada Submits New Route for Oil Pipeline

MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The company planning the disputed Keystone XL oil pipeline has proposed a new route through Nebraska that avoids the state's environmentally sensitive Sandhills region.

Calgary-based TransCanada submitted a series of proposed routes — including a preferred alternative — late Wednesday to Nebraska environmental officials.

The state has become a focus of concern for the 1,700-mile pipeline, which would carry oil from Canada to the Texas Gulf Coast. President Barack Obama blocked the pipeline earlier this year, citing uncertainty over the Nebraska route, which would travel above an aquifer that provides water to eight states.

Details of the preferred route were not immediately available. A spokesman for the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality said officials hope to post the full proposal on the Internet as soon as Thursday.

A spokeswoman for the State Department said U.S. officials had not received notification of a new route. State Department approval is needed because the \$7 billion pipeline would cross a U.S. border.

In blocking the pipeline in January, Obama said there was not enough time for a fair review before a looming deadline forced on him by congressional Republicans. The action did not kill the project but put off a tough choice on the pipeline project, which has become a flashpoint in a bitter partisan fight over jobs and the environment.

Pipeline supporters — including GOP lawmakers and many business and labor leaders— call the pipeline an important job creator. Opponents — including Democrats and environmental groups — say it would transport "dirty oil" from tar sands in Alberta, Canada, that requires huge amounts of energy to extract. They also worry about a possible spill.

Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman signed a bill earlier this week that allows the state to proceed with its review of the proposed pipeline through his state, regardless of what happens at the federal level.

Obama said last month he will direct federal agencies to fast-track a segment of the pipeline from Oklahoma to Texas. The 485-mile line from Cushing, Okla., to refineries on Texas' Gulf coast would remove a critical bottleneck in the country's oil transportation system, as rising oil production has outgrown pipelines' capacity to deliver oil to refineries.

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