

## KY Calls For Keystone Approval

ADAM BEAM, Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes called on President Barack Obama to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline, joining 11 incumbent Democrats as the party tries to keep control of the Senate this November.

Grimes' statement Wednesday to The Associated Press came on the same day that a group committed to blocking the pipeline's construction announced plans to spend \$500,000 setting up field offices in Kentucky to defeat U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell. And it comes after McConnell and Republican party officials have repeatedly criticized Grimes for delaying her opinion on the project, which has become a key issue in Senate races across the country by pitting the value of economic development against protecting the environment.

"The administration should rule now and approve the project," Grimes said. "Putting Americans back to work in good-paying jobs that strengthen the middle class is my top priority and it should be the federal government's as well."

Grimes said while the environmental concerns about the projects are justified, "they have been addressed," adding that the pipeline's route has been changed in response to concerns about the pipeline's impact in Nebraska. But last week, the State Department said it was delaying a decision on the pipeline until after the Nebraska Supreme Court rules on a case that could affect the pipeline's path.

"While the Nebraska Supreme Court has not ruled, the State Department insisted last week that the case would not hinder it from making a decision," Grimes said. "Like any project of this scale, the Keystone is not perfect. But on balance, the project offers much needed economic and employment opportunity. We need to finish the Keystone XL pipeline and consider other vital infrastructure projects that will benefit Kentucky."

The Keystone pipeline would transport crude oil from Canada through Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska before linking up with existing pipelines. It would not cross through Kentucky.

Another pipeline project closer to home has drawn plenty of opposition from Kentuckians. Two energy companies, Williams Co. and Boardwalk Pipeline Partners, are seeking to build a 180-mile pipeline through more than a dozen Kentucky counties to carry natural gas liquids. The companies have pushed the construction completion date back to 2016 as they continue to seek agreements with landowners. A Franklin Circuit Court judge ruled earlier this year that the companies could not invoke eminent domain laws to condemn private property to make way for the pipeline.

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Grimes has criticized the Obama administration's energy policies before. But she had yet to take a position on the pipeline, which has drawn the ire of Kentucky Republicans who insist a vote for Grimes would be a vote to advance Obama's agenda.

"Alison Lundergan Grimes took nine months and endless political pressure to accept a project that is being blocked purely by environmental extremism," McConnell spokeswoman Allison Moore said. "If this is the kind of reluctant advocacy Kentucky coal miners can expect, it's pretty clear why left-wing environmental groups are filling her campaign coffers."

Before Grimes' announcement Wednesday, a San Francisco-based super PAC that opposes the Keystone pipeline construction announced plans to spend \$500,000 to open field offices in Kentucky aimed at defeating McConnell. In a news release, Credo SuperPAC said it was skipping Sen. Mary Landrieu's tight Senate race in Louisiana because she "frequently votes against progressives." Landrieu supports the Keystone pipeline construction.

But Becky Bond, the group's president, said their No. 1 priority is to defeat McConnell, whom she called "one of the most obstructionist leaders we have in Washington."

"We think everyone in position of power should do everything they can to slow climate change," Bond said. "But the Keystone XL issue is not up to the Senate. It's up to the president. The most important vote for us is the vote cast for majority leader."

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