

*Congressmen Cite "Serious Concerns about the Objectivity of the Process"*

WASHINGTON – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3) was joined by 32 of his House colleagues in calling on the U.S. State Department to find the proposed route of the Keystone XL pipeline not in the national interest. Citing emails showing a too-cozy relationship between State Department officials and TransCanada lobbyists, as well as the fact that TransCanada was allowed to handpick the company that conducted its environmental review, the Congressmen also said that serious concerns had been raised about the objectivity of the review process.

“Rather than acting as fair arbiters of TransCanada’s application to build a massive pipeline across environmentally sensitive areas of the United States, State Department officials appear to have acted as little more than cheerleaders for the company’s bid,” the letter reads. “Any manipulation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process taints its outcome and makes the final product unacceptable as the basis for a finding of national interest.”

The letter was also supported by environmental groups that have been leading opponents of the proposed pipeline.

“It means a great deal that so many members of Congress are speaking out and calling attention to the corruption of the pipeline review process,” said Erich Pica, President of Friends of the Earth. “The conflicts of interest, bias and complicity at the core of the State Department’s review make it clear that the review has lost credibility and can no longer be trusted as the basis for the pipeline decision.”

"I'm so glad to see House members sticking up not just for the integrity of the atmosphere, but also the integrity of the political process," said Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org. "If environmental reviews are run by the companies involved, there's really not much point in doing them; hopefully this letter will help Obama's Administration figure out that it's time to start over again."