

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

December 9, 2010

The Honorable Ben Nelson  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your October 21 letter regarding the TransCanada Keystone XL Pipeline. The Department recognizes that ensuring the Keystone XL Pipeline receives a complete environmental review, including any potential impacts on the Nebraska Sandhills and the Ogallala Aquifer, is an important issue for you, your constituents, and the State of Nebraska. We are undertaking a meticulous environmental review, consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act and Executive Order 13337 (E.O. 13337).

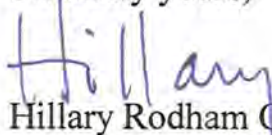
We have not made a decision on the Keystone XL pipeline, and will not make one until we complete all steps of our review process. The Department has a strong commitment to the environment and ensuring that decisions related to the pipeline are fully informed.

Department officials are currently reviewing public comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and making edits to that document. We have not yet decided whether the next version of the EIS will be a supplemental draft EIS or a final EIS. Once the final EIS is issued, however, the federal agencies identified in E.O. 13337 will have 90 days to express their views on whether granting the application would be in the national interest. When the interagency consultation process is complete, the permit application will be prepared for a final Department decision.

In order for the State Department to make a sound decision, it is important that we conduct our review in a thorough and transparent manner, taking into consideration all relevant factors, including both environmental and economic impacts.

Thank you for your interest. I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely yours,

  
Hillary Rodham Clinton