

RESOLUTION NO. 13-5

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF FAIRFAX IN OPPOSITION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED KEYSTONE XL TAR SANDS PIPELINE

WHEREAS, a major oil transmission pipeline is planned to extend from northern Alberta, Canada, from areas that have sand mixed with tar and oil, called "tar sands," to refineries in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Alberta tar sands reserves are trapped under an area of pristine boreal forests and wetlands covering 4.3 million hectares, an area roughly the size of Florida which currently is the world's largest terrestrial carbon sequestration ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, the current tar sands development is the world's largest industrial installation and will effectively result in deforestation, strip mining, and serious water contamination by heavy metals and carcinogenic toxins left in tailings ponds; and

WHEREAS, James Hansen, Director of NASA's Goddard Institute and a leading climate scientist, has stated that opening up the Canadian tar sands petroleum deposits would make climate stabilization impossible and signals "game over" for the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, the route of the pipeline, called Keystone XL because it is the second oil transmission pipeline to be constructed by the same company that built the first Keystone pipeline, crosses through Indian country in northern Alberta, Saskatchewan, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, near and potentially over, many culturally significant areas for Tribal Nations within those provinces and states; and

WHEREAS, based on the poor environmental record of the first Keystone pipeline, which includes numerous spills, U.S. regulators shut the pipeline down in late May, 2011, and, therefore, based on the record of the first Keystone pipeline, and other factors, it is probable that further environmental disasters will occur if the new pipeline is allowed to be constructed; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency's assistant administrator for enforcement and compliance Cynthia Giles has stated, "If a spill did occur, the potential for oil to reach groundwater in these areas is relatively high given shallow water table depths and the high permeability of the soils overlying the aquifer" and has urged the Department of State to extend its review of TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline, arguing that "regulators have not adequately measured the project's potential harm to air quality or sensitive areas along the route."; and

WHEREAS, the first two draft Environmental Impact Statements issued by the US State Department were criticized for significant deficiencies by the US Environmental Protection Agency; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, has passed a resolution against the Keystone XL pipeline because of its negative impacts on cultural sites and the environment in those portions of Indian country over and through which it is proposed to be constructed; and

WHEREAS, the First Nations of Canada, representing the vast majority of First Nations impacted by "tar sands" development, have unanimously passed resolutions supporting a moratorium on new "tar sands" development and expansion until a "cumulative effects management system" is in place, and are also in opposition to the pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the pipeline is unnecessary as a number of other pipelines are not at full capacity to carry oil from Canada to refineries in the U.S., and the oil is also not likely to end up on the U.S. market but will be exported to foreign countries; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairfax Town Council opposes the construction of Trans Canada's proposed Keystone XL Pipeline Project due to the adverse consequences the project will have on the environment, human health, and economy; and calls on the US State Department to withdraw its Final Environmental Impact Statement and produce another draft which analyzes the impacts and risks of the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline Project on domestic lands and communities during drought conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Fairfax Town Council calls on President Obama, Congress and the US State Department to find that the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline Project is not in the current or future national interest; and to encourage the United States to reduce its reliance on the world's dirtiest and most environmentally destructive form of oil – the "tar sands" –and requests the U.S. government to take aggressive measures to invest in sustainable energy solutions that include clean alternative energy and improved energy efficiency.

The foregoing Resolution was duly introduced and adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax held in said Town on the 6th day of February, 2013, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

JOHN REED, MAYOR

Attest:

Judy Anderson, Town Clerk