

PUC refuses to revoke permit for Keystone XL oil pipeline

By Bob Mercer
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – South Dakota regulators could decide very soon whether TransCanada has shown it can still meet conditions set in 2010 for the Keystone XL oil pipeline project.

The decision by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission could come as early as the next regular meeting Jan. 5, chairman Chris Nelson said Tuesday.

"There's no other information to come in," Nelson said in response to a reporter's question.

President Obama's administration decided Nov. 6 the pipeline from Alberta can't cross the U.S. border.

TransCanada never began construction. One of the conditions in the 2010 state permit requires federal approval.

Under state law, because no work began for four years, TransCanada must certify the state permit conditions can still be met.

That is the step currently pending before the state commission.

Commission members voted 3-0 Tuesday to reject arguments by KXL opponents that the permit should be revoked and the certification application should be dismissed.

"The fact is, a different president can easily make a different decision," commissioner Gary Hanson said.

"Just because it was turned down once doesn't mean it will be turned down in the future," he added.

Nelson said the South Dakota segment of the project couldn't be built without federal approval first.

Opponents described the project as dead Tuesday. Obama has one year remaining in his second and final term as president.

"They're going to have to start from ground zero again," said Robin Martinez, a lawyer from Kansas City, Missouri, who represents opponent Dakota Rural Action.

William Taylor, a lawyer from Sioux Falls who represents TransCanada, said the company isn't giving up now with a new president 13 months away.

"The project has not been abandoned," Taylor said. "We don't know what the next president will do."

Nelson, the PUC's chairman, said a rejection by the next president would mean the project's end in South Dakota.

"I think that's something to keep in mind," Nelson said.

DENR Seeks Public Input on EPA Clean Power Plan for South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is taking a two-pronged approach as it prepares to respond to the controversial federal Clean Power Plan. The plan, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), seeks to reduce carbon emissions from electrical-generating plants.

First, DENR is participating in a lawsuit that attempts to stop the new rules from becoming effective. The South Dakota Attorney General joined a lawsuit with 24 states opposing the Clean Power Plan.

The second prong is to develop a South Dakota proposal for putting the new Clean Power Plan rules into effect, should the lawsuit fail. To develop the proposal, the department will seek public input in the coming months, request a two-year extension from EPA by the Sept. 6, 2016 deadline and then finalize a state Clean Power Plan for submittal to EPA by Sept. 6, 2018.

DENR has developed a webpage at <http://denr.sd.gov/des/aa/aacleanpowerplan.aspx> to keep people apprised of progress made on both prongs. The website will provide information about how the department plans to meet federal timelines.

make announcements about upcoming public meetings and where people can provide public input during the process.

"People need to become informed about EPA's Clean Power Plan because its purpose is to promote alternate sources of electricity that emit less carbon," said DENR Secretary Steve Pirner. "As the plan moves forward, everyone who uses electricity and who pays an electric bill will have a stake in the plan."

EPA's Clean Power Plan will have a direct impact on two power plants in South Dakota. The first is the coal-fired Big Stone Power Plant near Milbank. The second is the natural gas-fired combined-cycle Deer Creek Station power plant near White. Each provides electricity to different customers.

In the federal rule, EPA used 2012 as the base year for carbon emissions from power plants. During 2012, 74 percent of the electricity generated in South Dakota was from renewable sources. This included 50 percent from the hydroelectric power plants at the Missouri River dams and 24 percent from wind generation. However, much of this energy was exported and used by people outside of South Dakota.

Christmas Tree Drop-Off - Open Dec.

11th - Jan. 18th

The Christmas Tree collection site is open from December 11th to January 18th and accepts real trees. The site is located on the south side of Broadway Street just west of Dakota Street. Please remove any plastic that you might wrap the tree in for transporting it as well as lights and decorations. The site will accept trees until January 18th.

Check The List: State Treasurer Has \$344.6 Million In Unclaimed Funds

Check The List: State Treasurer Has \$344.6 Million In Unclaimed Funds

PIERRE – Santa isn't the only one keeping a list. State Treasurer Rich Sattgast has \$344.6 million in unclaimed property he's looking to return to the rightful owners and you may be on his list.

Unclaimed property refers to accounts in financial institutions, businesses and government agencies that have had no activity for three years or longer. The State of South Dakota acts as the custodian of lost property until it can be returned to the rightful owners.

Since July, the Unclaimed Property Division has received \$71.7 million in forgotten funds and returned over \$7.5 million to claimants.

"As a father of three, I understand how important the holidays are for families. A little extra cash can make a big difference, especially this time of year," said Sattgast.

To check for unclaimed property, visit www.sdtreasurer.gov or call the unclaimed property hotline at 1-866-357-2547 to talk with an unclaimed property representative.

Farm Bureau Members Donate to Feeding South Dakota HURON – Farm and ranch families who belong to the South Dakota Farm Bureau (SDFB) are paying it forward this holiday season, making a donation of \$2,421 to Feeding South Dakota.

"Farmers and ranchers are in the food business, and we are dedicated to showing people the positive story of how that food is grown and raised today," said Cindy Foster, who farms with her husband near Fulton, S.D., and serves as Chair of SDFB's

Women's Leadership Team.

"We also want to help get that food to those who need it most, especially during this Christmas season. Feeding South Dakota is a wonderful organization, and it's our pleasure to help in this way."

The donations were collected through a freewill offering during the "Sharing Our Harvest" luncheon, held during the SDFB 98th Annual Meeting. The donations came from individual farmers and ranchers who were in attendance at the meeting, and from County Farm Bureau organizations across the state.

The SDFB Women's Leadership Team heads up the organization's efforts to educate people about modern agriculture and to reach out to those in need. In addition to this annual donation to Feeding South Dakota, donations from Farm Bureau members and county Farm Bureaus makes it possible to provide year-round delivery of milk to the refrigerators at both of the Ronald McDonald Houses in Sioux Falls, plus about \$1,000 worth of groceries to stock the Sanford house's pantry. Rapid City Regional Hospital is also a recipient of Farm Bureau donations to provide food for families with children receiving medical care.

South Dakota Farm Bureau is the state's largest general agriculture organization, representing more than 16,000 farm, ranch and rural families across the state.

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Country of Origin Labels Repealed on Beef and Pork



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The United States Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on beef and pork products will no longer be required at the grocery store effective immediately. That is in response to a provision passed on Friday by both the U.S. House and Senate as a part of the omnibus 2016 spending legislation. U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the agency would no longer enforce those provisions.

South Dakota Stockgrowers Association President Bill Kluck

"We're disgusted with the politics that have led to this repeal. It's just crazy that we can label car parts and diamonds and t-shirts, but we aren't allowed to tell you where your steak is from. It makes no sense to me," said Stockgrowers President Bill Kluck. "As it now stands, COOL is gone on

all beef and pork products, so our customers won't be able to know where that food is from. Losing these labels is a huge loss for our customers but also for us as producers. We're producing high quality products and we now have no way to distinguish our beef from that of 20 some countries that are importing beef to the states."

"We've seen our markets fall considerably in the last months. Our calf prices are down drastically from last year and we're seeing more and more cheap beef imported from other countries. That has a significant impact on our U.S. economy," explained Kluck. "Repealing these labels won't help our producers. It will only make it easier for the big meatpacking industry to push down our market prices while supplying meat from foreign sources and the customer no longer has the right to know

the difference."

The labels were repealed after a long battle with the World Trade Organization after Canada and Mexico filed suit against the United States, claiming that COOL violated provisions of the NAFTA trade agreement and discriminated against their producers. At the same time, Canada and Mexico livestock producers were experiencing record prices for their animals and importing large volumes of beef and pork into the United States.

On December 7, Canada and Mexico were granted authority to assess more than \$1 billion in annual tariffs as compensation for damages caused to their economies by U.S. Labeling laws. The decision was substantially less than the \$3 billion originally requested by those countries and yet it caused a ripple of panic through lawmakers in Washington DC.

Vaughn Meyer, Stockgrowers Marketing Committee Chair from Reva said, "It is very disheartening to realize our national Congressional leaders would rush to appease a WTO tribunal rather than defend the rights of United States consumers to choose safe and wholesome beef

and pork products. It is also very disappointing that our Congressmen and Congresswomen would sacrifice U.S. sovereignty through these free trade agreements."

"SD Stockgrowers are very proud of Senator Thune for recognizing the many perils lurking within the 2016 Omnibus Spending Bill. His refusal to not support legislation which stripped South Dakota farmers and ranchers of COOL and their rights to label their products was a very noble decision," stated Meyer.

Bill Kluck said, "Stockgrowers will continue to fight for strong country of origin labeling. We're not giving up on this. We hope that folks will continue to ask for U.S.A. raised product at the grocery store and support our beef producers right here in the United States, because as ranchers we're going to keep raising high quality, safe beef for your family."

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South Dakota State announces scholarship recipients

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Dec. 22, 2015 – South Dakota State University announced the following students will receive scholarships this academic year. They are:

Brett Bye, Vermillion, Yellow and Blue Scholarship; Andrew Heine, Vermillion, Yellow and Blue Scholarship; Jacob Krier, Vermillion, Yellow and Blue Scholarship; Brooke Schwasinger, Vermillion, E. Keith Edgerton Memorial Scholarship; and

Travis Weber, Vermillion, Yellow and Blue Scholarship. Bye is the son of Brook and Shelly Bye. He is a freshman studying agriculture business and engineering. In high school, he attended Boys' State and was a member of the wrestling team.

Heine, a freshman agriculture business major, is the son of Todd and Kelly Heine. In high school, he was active in student council and Boys' State.

Krier, a freshman, is the son of Paul and Paula Krier. In high school, he was active in swimming, show choir, National Honor Society, church band, student council and Students Against Destructive Decisions.

A junior pharmacy major, Schwasinger is the daughter of Tim and Patty Schwasinger. She is a student technology fellow and is involved in American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists.

A freshman biology student, Weber is the son of Terry and Linda Weber. He was involved in football, baseball, Boys' State and National Honor Society.

I must apologize for omitting a thank you to the Clay County Sheriff's Department who initially responded to our emergency some weeks ago. We all should appreciate the outstanding job the sheriff and deputies do for our community in keeping us safe.

Many thanks!
Terry & Lindia Brady

Thank you
I would like to thank everyone who made my 100th Birthday special, with an extra thank you to my 3 daughters and son who worked so hard to keep this birthday surprise a secret.
The best birthday card shower from relatives, friends and neighbors from 6 states. From my love of flowers, I received 2 bouquets and a poinsettia plant. Everyone went to Toby's for a wonderful dinner with excellent service for so many. Home for cake and ice cream. It was an awesome success and wonderful having my family together again.

Thank you, Thank you...Goldie Sealey

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