

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We are writing to you because for many years you have been a stalwart friend of low income and minority communities and a spokeswoman for increased environmental and social justice. We are deeply concerned that the Department of State's review of Keystone XL is in direct conflict with the true consideration and advancement of environmental justice to which you and the administration have shown clear devotion. We feel that the Department is refusing to sufficiently analyze potential health impacts this project would have on our communities. Furthermore, we are concerned that the State Department is unwilling to provide an opportunity for local public dialogue on the current Keystone XL's Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) during the official comment period.

Independent analysis has concluded that ninety percent of the increased refining capacity accompanying the proposed Keystone XL pipeline will likely occur in Port Arthur and Houston.¹ However, the SDEIS does not examine the potential expansion of individual refineries and the associated impacts on the surrounding communities as a result of this project, but assigns vague and broad conclusions that are simply insufficient². Previous concern about the cumulative effects of multiple environmental impacts in Port Arthur led to the city's designation as an Environmental Justice Showcase Community, and it is imperative that the air pollution caused by tar sands refining and the refinery operations themselves are thoroughly analyzed before the Keystone XL pipeline is approved. Our community is already overburdened by more air pollution than is federally acceptable for human health. Among other toxic metals, tar sands

¹ Richard B. Kuprewicz. Accufacts Inc. "PADD III & PADD II Refinery Options for Canadian Bitumen Oil and the Keystone XL Pipeline." June 29, 2010. p. 2.

² U.S. Department of State "Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Keystone XL." P.3-172.

contain 11 times more sulfur and nickel, six times more nitrogen, and five times more lead than conventional crude oil.³ All of these pollutants are harmful to human health, causing lung and respiratory problems such as bronchitis, asthma, respiratory infections, and decreased lung function.

Among other new information, the SDEIS found that tar sands are 17% dirtier than conventional crude! How then is it justifiable that our communities not be given a public hearing and opportunity to comment on this new information? We ask you to correct this oversight and ensure that our communities are given the courtesy of public hearings during the official comment period so that we may learn more about this proposed project and so that the State Department can hear from us.

As you know, meaningful public participation is a cornerstone of achieving environmental justice. The Council for Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations require agencies to make diligent efforts to involve the public throughout the environmental review process.⁴ Public participation is especially important in communities like ours where residents may be impacted on a daily basis and are already experiencing high levels of industrial air pollution from existing facilities. We specifically request that public hearings be held in both Houston and Port Arthur where residents can ask questions and thoroughly understand the implications of the KXL project.

In conclusion, we thank you for your past efforts on behalf of low-income and minority communities. We ask that you will continue to support us by ensuring that the State Department provide a scientific study of how Keystone XL's tar sands imports will impact our communities and that we be granted local public hearings during the SDEIS's official comment period.

Sincerely,

³ Benjamin J. Wakefield. The Environmental Integrity Project. "Feeding U.S. Refinery Expansions with Dirty Fuel." June 2008. http://environmentalintegrity.org/pdf/publications/Tar_Sand_Report.pdf Accessed July 8, 2010. p. 4.

⁴ Council on Environmental Quality's guidance document, "Environmental Justice: Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act," (CEQ 1997).

Representative Jessica Farrar
District 148

Juliet Stipeche
HISD Trustee District VIII

Fernando Cisneros
President, North Central Civic Association

Dora Campa
VP, Melrose Civic Association

Carmen Nuncio
President, LULAC Council 402

Carlos De Hoyos
Community Leader

Edward Ybarra
Treasurer, LULAC Council 402

Ruby Ramirez
Member, LULAC Council 4566

Rick Rodriguez
Member, LULAC Council 402

Jenifer Wagley, M. Ed.
Program Manager, Avenue CDC, GO Neighborhoods (A LISC Houston Project)

Mary Almendarez,
2nd VP & Scholarship Program Chair,
LULAC Council 402, Texas LULAC Education Committee Member

Mary Ramos
Texas LULAC Chief of Staff, President of LULAC Council 4566

Gloria Rubac
International Action Center

Massoud Nayeri
Houston United

Victor M. Castillo
Harris County Dem. Pct. 39 Chair

Francisco Arguelles
Colectivo Flatlander

Laura Boston
Director, Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center

Bryan Parras
Co-Founder, t.e.j.a.s.

Juan Parras
Co-Founder, t.e.j.a.s.

Liana Lopez
Board Member, KPFT Local Station Board

Cesar Espinosa
FIEL HOUSTON INC

Iris Contreras
East End Studio Gallery Coordinator

Rafael Villarreal
Houston Artist

Susie Moreno
Harris County Dem. Pct. 231 Chair

Henry Cooper
Host & Producer, Proyecto Latino-Americano Radio Show

Delilah Montoya
Associate Professor, University of Houston

Angela Sanchez
Media Consultant

Cecilia Dykes
Air Alliance Houston

Matthew Tejada
Director, Air Alliance Houston

Johnny Rovell
Communications Manager

Rosalia Guerrero-Luera

Board Member, t.e.j.a.s.

Alberto Luera
Board Member, t.e.j.a.s.

Dave Atwood
President, Houston Peace and Justice Center

Lee Loe
Co-Editor, Houston Peace and Justice Center

Ted Weisgal
Vice Chair, KPFT Local Station Board

Marina Tristan
Assistant Director, Arte Publico Press

Tony Diaz
Director & Founder of Nuestra Palabra, college professor

Aida Robinson
Concerned Resident

Jesus Velez
Concerned Resident

Gabriela Baeza
Associate Professor of Spanish, University of Houston

Robert Gartner
Concerned Resident

Elva Alvarez
Concerned Resident

Carmen Abrego
Press Representative