

December 12, 2011

The Honorable John A. Boehner
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

The National Construction Alliance II strongly supports a key element of H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011. The North American Energy Access Act, the provisions to expedite the permitting of the Keystone XL project, a crude oil pipeline from Hardisty, Alberta, to America's Gulf Coast, are of critical importance to the National Construction Alliance II (NCA II). The NCA II – a partnership between two of the nation's leading construction unions, the International Union of Operating Engineers and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America – believes that establishing procedural certainty for construction of the stalled pipeline project is necessary given the significant energy and economic consequences of building the project.

The Keystone XL is now in its fourth year of permitting, and every day that passes represents a missed opportunity to put thousands of union construction workers back on the job building the largest private construction project in the United States. Delay until 2013 is unacceptable, likely leading TransCanada to withdraw its application and ending the prospect for creating jobs.

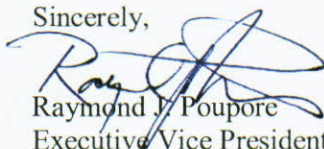
The legal record clearly supports finding the project in the national interest. According to the State Department's own Final Environmental Impact Statement, the fifty-seven special conditions developed by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration – and voluntarily agreed to by TransCanada – "...would have a degree of safety greater than any typically constructed domestic oil pipeline system under current regulations."

Carpenters and Operating Engineers support these Congressional efforts to provide procedural certainty to the multi-billion dollar Keystone XL pipeline proposal. Though the urgency of the Keystone XL cannot be overstated from the perspective of our unemployed members, we cannot embrace the changes proposed by H.R. 3630 to the federal unemployment insurance system, which would wind up harming some of the same unemployed workers who hope to build the Keystone XL, as well as other long-term unemployed workers. While the Keystone XL project would ideally be considered as a stand-alone legislative matter, we understand the procedural necessity of combining this vital issue in a comprehensive legislative vehicle as the end of a Congressional session approaches.

We strongly encourage you to seek every legislative opportunity to expedite the permitting process for Keystone XL. Given the persistent and high levels of unemployment among our members and other construction crafts, the expeditious permitting of this pipeline project should be of the highest concern to this Congress and the Administration.

We urge you to modify the punitive aspects of the unemployment insurance provisions, and proceed with legislation to expedite the permitting of Keystone XL which will create tens of thousands of jobs almost immediately. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Poupore
Executive Vice President



UNITED BROTHERHOOD
of CARPENTERS & JOINERS
of AMERICA

Douglas J. McCarron
General President



INTERNATIONAL UNION
of OPERATING ENGINEERS

Vincent J. Giblin
General President