



Donald F. Santa Jr., President & CEO - Interstate Natural Gas Association of America presenting on the state of the pipeline

U.S. Congressman Kevin Cramer (ND-R) argues the construction of Keystone XL brings a wide range of benefits including employment opportunities, energy security, enhanced safety, environmental protection, and a beneficial exchange with Canada. In addition to supporting 42,000 jobs and further establishing the North American continent as a price setter for oil, it would increase traffic safety, rail safety, and reduce emissions by removing 300 to 500 long-haul trucks from North Dakota roads. The North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources estimates greenhouse gas emissions for rail transportation are 1.8 times higher than pipelines.

“You’ve asked for bipartisan bills. You’ve asked for us to work together. Here we have a bipartisan, bicameral solution. One that the American public supports in a big way, one that would create jobs, one that would lift up the middle class,” Cramer said. “I would just beg, that the President would reconsider his veto threat on this important bipartisan jobs bill, and sign it when it comes to his desk so we can get people back to work, so we can become less dependent on foreign sources of oil from across the sea, and become more interdependent with our neighbors in Canada.”

Despite the XL hold up, Lynn Helms, director, North Dakota Department Mineral Resources, sees a number of pipeline projects in 2015, as well as many years to come.

“Every inch of pipe that was put in the ground since 2006 to the end of 2013 pretty much was too small. Nobody knew really what the ultimate number of wells or the productivity those wells was going to be,” Helms said. “So when industry, working with the Industrial Commission, came up with the concept of the gas capture plans, it changed all of that. That means that all of that work that was done during those seven years, has to be redone. Every mile of that has to be looped or rebuilt with two-to-two-and-a-half times as large pipe. So that is a problem.”

Helms cited a few examples like adding pumps or compressors on an existing pipeline and placing a second pipe alongside the original.

While the pipeline pose a potential problem, Helms reminds us how and why the Bakken, as well as other shale plays, will keep the economy moving.

“The entrepreneurs and the companies that are looking at the possibility of manufacturing plastic in North Dakota from the huge amounts of ethane that we’re going to produce, they’re all really excited about the new projections for oil and gas production and also you know what they’re going to have in terms of feed stock to work with,” Helms said. “But they are also excited to hear that but they’re also excited to hear that all of this infrastructure we put in the ground has to be redone with larger pipe.”

Larger pipe. From local to state to federal that seems to be the theme in 2015. So much the Keystone is followed by XL, extra large. Across the country, big and small, there are an abundance of pipeline projects permeating the power plays indicating 2015 will no doubt be the Year of the Pipe.

