

National Black Church Initiative

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<http://www.naltblackchurch.com/environment/index.html>

February 9, 2013

Honorable Barack H. Obama
President
United States of America
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Through:

Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
United States of America
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Obama:

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 black churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African-Americans from across the country, urges your administration to reject the proposed alternative route of the Keystone XL oil pipeline, which Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman approved January 22nd.

Currently, the State Department is evaluating the potential risks involved in the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline, which would move crude oil from Alberta, Canada through Nebraska and on to the Gulf Coast. The Black Church does not oppose the pipeline itself, but the process of extracting oil from tar sands in Canada – a process that emits unnecessary pollution compared to other methods – and the proposed alternate route through the Nebraska Sand Hills region.

This is another case where the potential costs to the environment are too great compared to the benefits. We have safer alternatives for extracting oil, along with other energy resources that could be explored with less risk to the environment.

The Black Church believes it should use its influence in the faith community to impact environmental policy and that it should offer its perspective on environmental policy both domestically and globally. NBCI's mission is to utilize its enormous moral authority and influence to support policies and programs that preserve the environment for future generations.

After President Obama's major reference to climate change in his inauguration speech, the Black Church is hopeful that his administration will reject the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. However, we believe that faith without works is dead. Consequently, we are asking your administration to oppose the latest plans concerning the Keystone XL pipeline and to offer to the American public a broader, environmentally conscious, strategic initiative that will balance the need for energy with the responsibility we have to preserve the environment God entrusted to us.

We are not here on earth to destroy and exploit God's creation for easy profits, but to be stewards of the environmental bounty that we have been given. As we see it, to live in harmony with nature is to live in harmony with God. The opposition to the Keystone XL is just one facet of the NBCI Environment Initiative, which is our vehicle for fighting for many issues that are of moral, political and economic significance to our members and to the nation as whole. Do not allow the construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

Respectfully,

Rev. Anthony Evans
President