South Dakota Resources Coalition

Volunteers in the public interest since 1972 Phone: 605-697-6675 928 4th Street, Office 4, Brookings, SD 57006

Testimony on TransCanada-Keystone Oil Pipeline
SD Public Utilitites Commission
Alexandria SD
June 25, 2007

I am Lawrence Novotny, secretary-treasurer of the South Dakota Resources Coalition, a stateewide environmental organization.

SDRC's major concern with the TransCanada Pipeline is the effect of oil spills. It is a known fact that pipelines do leak. The Alaska Oil Pipeline has had leaks. The Geological Service estimated that 83 crude oil spills occurred between 1994 – 1996 which each spill averaging around 2 million gallons. Even TransCanada in its *Pipeline Risk Assessment* estimated that a 42,000 gallon spill may occur once in 12 years.

This pipeline will be passing through the prairie pothole region which is a major water source for our nation's waterfowl and is a vital area for our state's hunting industry. The pipeline will pass through or over water aquifers that supply water for our towns and farms. Among the many substances in crude oil are benzene, toluene, and xylene, all of which are hazardous. The EPA has established a drinking water standard of no more than 0.005 parts per million for benzene which is a carcinogen. One teaspoon of benzene can contaminate 260,660 gallons of water. It is extremely difficult to clean up a water aquifer after it has been contaminated with oil.

TransCanada's own *Pipeline Risk Assessment* states that an 84000 gallon oil spill would require removal of 2 million cubic yards of soil, which is a land area of about 400 acres 3 feet

deep. A spill of this size would disrupt a lot of vital agricultural productive land.

TransCanada needs to take measures to ensure an almost zero spill possibility. Some of these are:

Lower Pipeline Pressure -- The permit application states that the pipeline will operate at a pressure of 1400-1700 psi which is more than double the operating pressures of other pipelines in the Midwest. Higher pressures will result in a larger volume of an oil spill. Why can't the pipeline pressure be reduced?

Add More Pump Stations -- The current plan calls for five pump stations in South Dakota. Doubling or tripling the number of pump stations will decrease the pipeline pressure.

Install More Mainline Values – The current plan calls for seven mainline valves. A valve needs to be located in every county.

Increase Pipeline Thickness – Both the US Geological Service and the National Transportation Safety Board say that one of the major causes of pipeline failure is corrosion caused by the lack of preventive maintenance. Why not double the wall thickness to minimize failure and/or enclose the pipeline in a protective barrier (another pipeline) to contain spills when they occur.

Locate in the I-29 Corridor -- The pipeline should be located within the I-29 corridor. That way spills would be more quickly noticed. Construction in the I-29 corridor would not be disrupting current agricultural operations.

Lawrence Novotny
Secretary-treasurer, SDRC