



TO: North Dakota Public Service Commission, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, Iowa Utilities Board, Illinois Commerce Commission

FROM: Midwest Alliance for Infrastructure Now

RE: Dakota Access Pipeline Support

I am writing today to show my support for the Dakota Access Pipeline that is currently planned for construction across North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. This pipeline is about transporting American oil for American needs, and investing in the economic future of our region. That's why I joined the Midwest Alliance for Infrastructure Now, a diverse organization made up of over 40 organizations across North and South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. Our members come from all walks of life and from many vocations including, agriculture, small business, labor, and construction.

I share the same concern for our land as many of the opponents of this project, and believe that projects of this scale should spur informed debate. But taking a realistic, fact-based approach to this issue makes me believe that pipelines are the best option to transport oil, and an important infrastructure project that can grow our economy, create jobs, and protect the interests of traditional Midwestern business. Our nation needs access in the near term to low-cost energy, and we must make the most responsible decisions about our current energy resources.

American agriculture is highly dependent on petroleum development. The simple fact is that the less oil we process domestically, the more we will have to import from foreign countries. Sourcing increased energy and oil from abroad can drive up energy prices for farmers who need gasoline and diesel for the majority of their farm equipment. Those costs, which impact a farmer's bottom line, are then passed along to the consumer and cause higher food prices both here in the Midwest and in cities throughout the country. The Midwest Alliance for Infrastructure Now believes that pipelines are an answer to climbing energy prices, as well as the transportation challenges that plague the agricultural sector as a result of oil trains.

Many opponents erroneously believe that if you stop the pipeline, you stop the oil. The rail systems in America are being inundated with oil tankers. Rail traffic has increased so dramatically that many farmers are being held ransom for rail space and some are actually being refused transport for grain because of long-term contracts to haul oil. The American Farm Bureau recently completed a study which placed the total loss for farmers as a result of the rail backlog at \$570 million for the 2014 harvest. Pipeline construction will help to alleviate the backlog and free up transport space for important agricultural commodities.

This project will provide our local economies a much needed positive boost. The construction alone will create thousands of jobs for American workers who will spend money and support local services during construction. Counties along the route will also receive ongoing property tax revenue for schools, services, and infrastructure creating a vibrant local economy. I have lived here my entire life and have seen first-hand the tremendous effects that this "pipeline economy" can bring to these communities. Everyone from the local banker all the way down to the smallest mom-and-pop shop is impacted when real money is injected into the economy. This isn't just another stimulus fund that is spent on road construction and then evaporates. This is real long-term economic growth, and is good for the future of business in our region.

Our coalition supports economic opportunity for the Midwest, energy security, and a business landscape that encourages growth and development across all sectors. We believe that the best interests of our region should drive the decision-making process, not the work of outside activist groups whose ultimate goal is to stop the use of the crude oil that we all rely upon every day. We should say yes to billions in investment, millions in tax revenue, thousands of jobs, and a new economic future for our communities.

Sincerely,

Ed Wiederstein
Chairman, Midwest Alliance for Infrastructure Now