

PETER SHUMLIN
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 17, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing to ask that you exercise your jurisdiction over the reversal of the Portland Montreal Pipe Line (PMPL) by requiring a new Presidential Permit and Environmental Impact Statement should the Portland Pipe Line Corporation (PPLC) attempt to reverse the PMPL.

Independent of federal jurisdiction, the State of Vermont has oversight regarding any pipeline reversal through Vermont's state land use law, known as Act 250. As confirmed recently by the District Seven Environmental Commission, Act 250 would be triggered by any proposal to reverse the PMPL for the transport of tar sands oil. While the company challenges Vermont's law, I believe state oversight regarding environmental and other impacts within our borders is critical, and I am committed to the State of Vermont having oversight regarding such a project within our borders.

My opposition to the transport of tar sands oil through the reversed PMPL is based upon the impacts of such a project in Vermont and concerns for Vermont's economy, environment, and natural resources in the event of a spill. I am also worried about the potential climate change impacts associated with the extraction and burning of tar sands from western Canada.

In 2008, PPLC's original plan to reverse the PMPL was stalled in the midst of the recession. Although the PPLC is not currently requesting permission for reversal from the State Department, there have been troubling signs that PPLC does intend to reverse the pipeline. PPLC representatives met with me and with legislative leaders this past session and made clear that they would welcome an economic use of the pipeline, including reversal. Meanwhile, a separate pipeline company with a connecting project, Enbridge, has gained approval from the Canadian government for a partial reversal of Line 9, which connects the PMPL to Michigan's tar sands pipeline, and a full reversal is under review.

I know you are aware of the consequences of tar sands spills seen in other communities, and that you are well-versed in the economic and environmental impacts that may result from increased tar sands transport. In addition, Vermont has already experienced destruction caused by climate change in the form of extreme weather and increased flooding, including Tropical Storm Irene.

The adverse impact this pipeline could have on carbon emissions, both from potential spills and the increased oil refining that may result from the additional flow of oil to the Montreal region, should be taken into account in any review of the pipeline reversal. The State of Vermont, through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, has also raised air quality concerns in the Canadian permit review process.

The State of Vermont recognizes the risks that such a substantial change in the function of this pipeline would pose to our state. For the sake of the people of Vermont and all those who would be affected by a potential spill, I hope you will require a new Presidential Permit and Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Shumlin", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Shumlin
Governor