

Guest Opinion: Just Show Us the Antidote!

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(Editor's note: This is Part I of a two-part guest editorial. Part II will run in Friday's York News-Times.)

Yes, we already know that bitumen is the most toxic, least efficient, most expensive and dirtiest form of energy. We know the earth is blown up to extract it.

We know it is transported out of Canada because distillation there would violate their clean air and water standards.

Curiously, it doesn't violate any standards in Port Arthur, Texas, a tax- and duty-free distillery and global export site.

And we know that getting this poisonous goop from Canada to Texas requires a huge pipe that is heated and pressurized and certain to leak at some points in time - up to 1.8 million gallons are already leaking daily, on average, somewhere in their systems, undetected.

And we know that to keep this payload in suspension requires mystery chemicals that Keystone says are "proprietary" - "trade secrets".

What we don't know is what this stuff is because they won't tell us! But we have a duty to know.

They admit to benzene, a horrid cancer-causer. What if the other stuff is worse; what if it is poisonous beyond remedy?

This is not a partisan issue. It's not about jobs or energy. It's not about payoffs to cross our lands.

It's not about the route. These are diversions, red herrings, smoke screens that have us arguing with each other. The only real issue is whether Keystone's wealth trumps Nebraska's health.

The sole issue is whether this pipeline should cross our border in the first place.

It makes no sense that a tube of death runs over the drinking and agricultural waters of Nebraska – our lifeblood – and that our departments of health and environmental quality don't know what's in it; and that foreign interests - who know but won't tell - control the antidote.

Maybe they'll sell it to us later, when our lands and waters and critters are dying.