

## Keystone XL, gambling with our future

Greg Awtry Publisher | Posted: Tuesday, April 23, 2013 12:00 am

Most of you have played poker at one time or another.

You risk treasure in hopes of benefiting by holding the winning hand. That's what is happening between TransCanada and Nebraskans. They want us to risk our most valuable treasures, land and water, while all the time they hold the winning hand that will benefit them by the billions.

Finally the table stakes have risen too high, as more Nebraskans are unwilling to gamble on a foreign company's word that a 36-inch pipe full of poison chemicals will have no impact on our land and water, forever.

And to make things worse, the people of Nebraska are playing with a short deck. All the Jacks, Queens and Kings (Federal Representatives, Senators and the Governor) have gone to the TransCanada side of the table. Nebraskans have tried to go to the draw but have pulled a pair of real losers in Adrian Smith and Lee Terry.

Adrian thinks pumping toxic oil through his district is fine. He also doesn't want to put the eight cents per barrel tax on Canadian oil right now, even though American oil has to pay the tax to replenish the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, which could be tapped in case of a large spill. He has yet come up with a logical explanation for that one.

Lee Terry, knowing the final public hearing would be in Nebraska, bulldozed ahead with his short-sighted legislation to bypass the State Department, nullifying our voices and obviously not giving a damn about what Nebraskans would say at the public hearing. How disgusting is that?

It is time to stop being politically correct with these two. In regards to the Keystone XL, Adrian Smith has been about effective as a plunger in an outhouse, while Lee Terry needs to run off and join the circus where his talent as a clown will get the respect he can't get from folks who desperately want to protect our land and water.

And while we are at it, Governor Heineman and Senator Mike Johanns were the two who wrote Obama and Clinton expressing their deep concerns over the pipe's original route through the aquifer, only to completely flip-flop when TransCanada did its so called "re-route" where it now plans to go over even more miles of the Ogallala Aquifer!

If they used their heads on this critical issue, one could only assume it was so their mouths could make noise, their brains could hold their hair up, while their ears were of no use at all, as they too made up their minds before the final public hearing in Grand Island.

Oh, then we have Sen. Deb Fischer, a self proclaimed land and water lover. She told the Lincoln Journal Star last week that the Obama administration should “move ahead” with the proposed Keystone XL pipeline.

In the same interview she said, Obama should “review comments made at the final hearing.” Which is it Deb, move ahead, or listen to the people? The Third District put her in office and now she wants a foreign corporation to slice us open like a butchered hog, place a poison tube right through our middle, sew us back up and tell us to go home and we’ll be OK? Deb needs to take a trip to Kalamazoo, Mich., and Mayflower, Ark., then get back to us.

Let’s get serious. The nation’s final KXL environmental hearing was held at the same venue as the Nebraska State Fair. Had this been an actual state fair, this current crop of elected officials would have been thicker than flies over at the bovine barn. But their minds were made up and nothing their constituents would say, nor over 800,000 comments submitted to the State Department, means anything to them. That says a lot about their view of democracy, doesn’t it?

Their absence was a glaring embarrassment on a day when the nation came to Nebraska to listen to the people, and our state leaders didn’t want to hear a word.

Now that the environmental phase is closing, the final phase in the review process begins. That is to determine whether the Keystone XL is in the “national interest” of the United States of America.

Eight different federal agencies will weigh in, along with a comment period for the citizens. But once again, Nebraska’s Washington contingency will lend deaf ears to the debate because they have already made up their minds.

Over the coming weeks we’ll be addressing why a foreign company, TransCanada, whose only interest is to ship foreign oil to the coast of Texas where it will be refined and much of it loaded on ships destined to foreign markets, is neither in the best interest of the U.S. nor the state of Nebraska. It would be nice if we could have that conversation with open-minded Nebraska politicians, but they have played their cards and left the parlor.

In Kenny Rogers’ famous ballad he sings, “You got to know when to hold’em, know when to fold’em, know when to walk away, know when to run ...” Last week’s public hearing clearly shows Nebraskans are no where close to walking away from this issue, showing TransCanada we’ll be staying strong until “the dealin's done!”