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## The Public Pulse, Sept. 13

Pipeline landowners need more

A Sept. 9 news story on the Keystone XL pipeline reported, “Several individual landowners would benefit, receiving thousands of dollars in lease payments in exchange for right-of-way for the 36-inch crude-oil pipeline, which will be buried 4 feet underground.”

The word “benefit” is not accurate. There would not be a lease of any property rights pursuant to pipeline easements. TransCanada wants a perpetual easement, which would permanently transfer property rights from all affected landowners to TransCanada. This would not be a lease one could terminate — actual property rights would be given up forever under the proposed Trans- Canada easements.

Landowners would be selling use of their land and property rights forever for a one-time payment now. Where is the “benefit?”

If I sold my house for \$100,000, I wouldn’t get a \$100,000 benefit. I would have traded my house for money, and I would be at a net zero position. Even so, at least I wouldn’t have the significant future risk and liability concerns, as Nebraska landowners would.

The idea of a “benefit” makes it seem like this pipeline project would be a net positive for landowners. The fact that TransCanada’s land acquisition costs are currently so small, relative to the overall \$7 billion project, is proof that landowners need to hold out for much higher prices.

I can’t figure out why the State of Nebraska doesn’t believe landowners should be treated fairly. Perpetual risk for a one-time payment — is that the Nebraska way?

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