

Oops, Sorry! Yet Another Pipeline Spill

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Section of ruptured pipe from Kalamazoo River spill in Michigan. Rupture length is approx 6 ft 5 inches and is 4 1/2 inches wide at the widest location. (photo by National Transportation Safety Board)

“Keystone XL will be the safest pipeline in the United States,” TransCanada officials tell us.

Well, duh... what do you think they would say? That it will be the second safest, or the least safe? Of course they are going to say “the safest.”

Can you spell “Titanic”? How about “Unsinkable”?

When builders put the pipeline under the Yellowstone River, I am sure someone said it is safe. Then there was the “Oops! Sorry!”

After tens of thousands of gallons of oil leaked, Kevin Allexon, company spokesman said, “Obviously we are very, very, regretful that this has happened and we are working hard, in collaboration with all the local authorities to make sure we mitigate the issue.”

(But I am sure someone said prior to the leak that the pipe was safe).

Notice the picture published with this article. It is the ruptured pipe that spilled over 800,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River near Marshall, Mich.

What do you think the odds are that someone called this pipe safe too?

Hundreds of people were treated for adverse health conditions as a result of the spill, and now, a year later, 40 miles of the Kalamazoo River still remain closed as they struggle to clean up the massive spill (from a safe pipe.)

Sargent County, North Dakota: Keystone I: A local resident noticed oil gushing 60 feet in the air.

Twenty minutes later TransCanada gets the leak shut down, but not after hundreds of gallons of the toxic oil had leaked out of the system. (A safe system would be my guess.)

We always hear the “Oops. Sorry!” talk.

TransCanada quotes after spills run the gambit, from “TransCanada has taken this incident very seriously.”

Or, “The system is working as it should.”

Or, “We built the system to the best of our ability to ensure these things don’t happen.”

Well, TransCanada. “These things” do happen!

Take the current leak in Denver, from the Suncor refinery that refines regional and Canadian tar sand oils. Last November a fly fisherman noticed a black substance leaking into Sand Creek.

It was discovered that large amounts of Benzene, the cancer-causing carcinogen were making their way into the South Platte River.

Now, months later, the clean up continues. Suncor vice president John Gallagher said, “Suncor is not perfect. We've had some spills on our site that have added to the contamination. It is our intention... to remove and recover all of the hydrocarbons in the soil that is practical.”

And two weeks ago, yet another major spill, this time in Canada, when over 100,000 gallons leaked into the Red Deer River which supplies drinking water to over 100,000 people.

The company (Plains Midstream) response, “We deeply regret this incident...” as they promised to clean it best they could. Meanwhile bottled drinking water is being shipped in for some along the river.

Oil gets out of pipes, and when it does it can no longer be explained away with claims that it was to be the safest pipe.

There is no such thing! Here in Nebraska we have it right. It's right to question the risks to our water and land. It's right to weigh the risks against the benefits.

It's right to question the tactics of international corporations. It's right to ensure the safety of our citizens. It's right to stand up and say no more toxic filled pipes over the Ogallala Aquifer.

Nebraskan's are unwilling to accept another “Oops. Sorry!” statement after a leak.

And finally, this, taken from page 3.13-8 of the Keystone XL Environmental Impact Study (EIS) regarding Potential Releases, (You and I call them leaks.)

According to the US Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration: Significant Incidents “from 1991 through 2010: 2,672 incidents; 40 fatalities; 178 injuries; \$2,221,600,007 property damage; 2,510,639 barrels lost; 1,113,894 barrels recovered, and 1,396,745 net barrels lost.”

Safe, safer, safest? Breaking news: Pipes leak!

Some people at TransCanada better be practicing their “Oops. Sorry!” speeches so they are ready when they have to start supplying bottled water to Nebraska residents along the proposed Keystone XL, or posting signs saying

“River Closed” alongside the “safest pipeline in the United States.”

Come on Nebraska; get our heads out of the tar-sands.