Keystone XL Pipeline In Review

This Keystone XL Pipeline has been a cross to bare for many as it's inception was not a product of the early 2000 thought processes of the Trans Canada leadership but that of a much longer span of creative development cast during the late eighties. It has since become a multi-national project headed by TransCanada with the sole objective of building a pipeline expanding on direct route from 'Alberta Tar Sands' to the Gulf of Mexico. Needless to say, barrels of oil and gas have been spilled every year historically and not the result of this modern transmittal means having a sound 1,210 mile range as was then designed with engineers to span. Having said this however, the considerations and concerns for the populations directly impacted by this project as well as the environment, sparked a long-term court battle lasting until this past summer, August 2019, as TC's Energy Keystone XL Pipeline received a victorious outcome from the courts ending the 20 year fight and tail construction as the $8 million pipeline stuck in regulatory hearings since 2008. There were high hopes that procedural error for the submission of an alternative blueprint path to carry product from Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska connecting with Canada and the operating Steele City pump station would prevail; but, that was not the case.

This pipeline project exist in sections as the construction of it into entirety has taken over twelve years. As the Northern leg encompassing Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska is co-joined with the Southern Oklahoma and Texas segment. This, originally proposed in 2009 by TransCanada, was approved in March 11, 2010 by the National Energy Board of Canada [NEB]. At each phase protest groups have organized and re-organized to fight each leg of this court driven elongated process to shut down the pipeline with Tar Sands oil from Canada through 7 states. In 2011 protest took place in Washington, DC, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Land owners were concerned as it would cross their property to which the TransCanada company opposed their efforts offering to pay and thence use the 'eminent domain' card against their litigation tools. Environmentalist chimed in urging the re-directional approach as this pipeline would impede upon the Ogallala which provides fresh water to eight semi-arid states and would pass over it just as the Lakota Sioux Tribes of South Dakota asserted the treaties of 1851 and 1868 [Fort Laramie] as indication that the government could not allow for a pipeline to be built due to Land Treaty. Henxe the KXL would go would be close to the reservations and impact their ecosystem. This prolonged their efforts in the north. However, this 'Keystone Cushing Pipeline' was completed to deliver oil from Steele City, Nebraska to Cushing Oklahoma in 2011. The Southern portion was under construction before the Northern.

In 2012, the Cushing Market Link Extention [Calmes] was on the table. This would be the Houston lateral connection to Houston Oil refineries and Cushing Market Link. The completion of these two extension meant there is complete flow of Oil from Oklahoma to the Gulf of Mexico. This end was completed and connected from Cushing in 2014. But this entire initiative was still traumatized with the environmental considerations and land ownership matters to encase the norther territory in this pipe-dream. Back in September 2013, the Nebraska case Thompson vs. Heineman reversed the provision cited as LB1161 and land owners were victorious in getting provisions proven unconstitutional. This prompted the Cowboy Indian Alliance to congregate and hold a successful 2014 1st March on Washington. Controversy continued throughout 2013-14 as the pipeline was highly criticized by Native Americans, environmentalist and white ranchers. The intensity of speculation of wrong doing and a wide gamet of other factors deemed to infringe upon the rights of American citizenry defined the terms for President Obama to shut down the northern leg of the project due to hugh public outcry in 2015.

Under Obama the various movements fighting the Keystone XL project since inceptions were able to shed new light on issues surrounding the project which caused his rejections of this Northern Portion citing 'environmental' matters. In November of that year, a bill to take away power was introduced in the decision making process approving Keystone XL was forced through Congress but it did not pass due to [Mother Jones] as there were 59 votes of approval hinged upon a necessary 60. Needless to say, during the duration of the construction and litigation procedures there were barrels of oil and gas spilled every year; this could only befit the urgency for protective measures to imparted within the plans for this end phase. Then as big business does, in 2016 after their southern successes, TransCanada filed a lawsuit against the Obama Administration stipulating there was a violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Unlike the surfers haven 'Pipeline', the death zone, the place of 'fallen heroes where tons of near death accidents occur, in time, this twenty year fight would be won and viability sustained under a new administration. January 24, 2017, President Trump signed an order inviting TransCanada to reapply for it's Keystone XL permit as there were interest in not just the pipeline but the inspiration within the labor market and it serving as a U.S. boost toward energy independence. There were still the Montana Lawsuit, the Bold Nebraska protest group, and the many land owners affected who had accepted the project and were eager to collect payments from the company. I am sure these were all pressure points

which President Donald Trump strategize over yet, the influence of employment opportunities and the assumption of financial gains prevailed in his signed executive order approving the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The Supreme Court decision is another step towards building this end zone of this vital energy infrastructure project. Their ruling in favor of an alternative route proposed by TC Energy, formerly TransCanada's 'Mainline Alternative Route' [MAR] would admonish fears of damaging the cultural and historic resources as depicted by the Sierra Club resistance group public protest. At this latent stage however, the TC corporation is not financially committed to this project despite it's intentions upon delivery of 800 million barrels a day along the voluminous miles of pipeage transferred through the U.S. to be sold in foreign markets with an $1.3B EBITDA annually.

By March 2020, the TC Corporation had recommitted to moving forward with the end tail construction plans for the overly delayed Keystone XL Pipeline as the Canadian government of Alberta had agreed to invest $1.1 billion U.S. currency as equity into the project. Additional capital of $6.9 billion U.S. currency would be made during the 2021 - 2022 years as funded by the combination of U.S. $4.2 billion project level credit facility to be guaranteed by the Alberta governments $2.7 billion invested by TC energy. TC will then acquire Alberta's equity investment and refinance the $4.2 billion credit facility debt.

The decisions were made well within the aftermath of the October 2019 environmental backlash as the TC Energy Keystone Pipeline leaked and estimated 383,000 gallons (91.4mill liters) of oil in northeastern North Dakota. Time will once again be the better teacher in educating us as to the effects and overall impact this KeystoneXL Pipeline will have upon our welfare.

Aspects of Interest:

Sierra Club : resistance group consisting of Yankton Sioux Tribe - South Dakota, Ponca Tribe- Nebraska, local land owners

Bold Nebraska Group: alliance of farmers, ranchers, Tribal Nations and citizens

There have been various incidents causing and estimated 500 Deaths, 2000 Injuries and $7Billion in losses since 1986

Mother Jones features articles relative to the Keystone XL Pipeline

The Southern Route : Energy & Gas Independence -- U.S. as it is relative to decreasing imports of Petroleum and other foreign sources of energy

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