

FREEDOM PIPELINE

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Open Letter to Canadians

February 16, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Red Deer – Mountain View, AB

Hours after being sworn into office on January 20, 2021, U.S. President Biden signed an executive order to revoke the presidential permit, thus cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline expansion project.

Thousands of direct jobs on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border were immediately lost. While this is disappointing to many Albertans, it does not come as a surprise as the Obama administration, which Biden was vice-president in, took a similar stance.

Prior to cancellation, TC Energy committed to operate the pipeline with net zero emissions when it was placed into service in 2023. Although Keystone XL is cancelled, the demand for oil will continue. Instead of shipping oil via a zero emissions pipeline, alternatives such as truck and rail will be required. This results in higher emissions and increased safety concerns.

From recent polling data, there is very little support from Canadians to see the federal government engage with the Biden administration in an attempt to have the permit re-instated. The Alberta government and other supporters of the pipeline have called for retaliatory measures and sanctions against the United States in an effort to restart the permit negotiation process. Unfortunately, these calls will fall on deaf ears. Additionally, the sanctions that could be brought against the United States would likely have little impact or only serve to make the situation worse. It is evident that the current Liberal government will not be taking further action on this file based on their initial comments on the decision and their overall ideological stance regarding the Western Canadian energy industry.

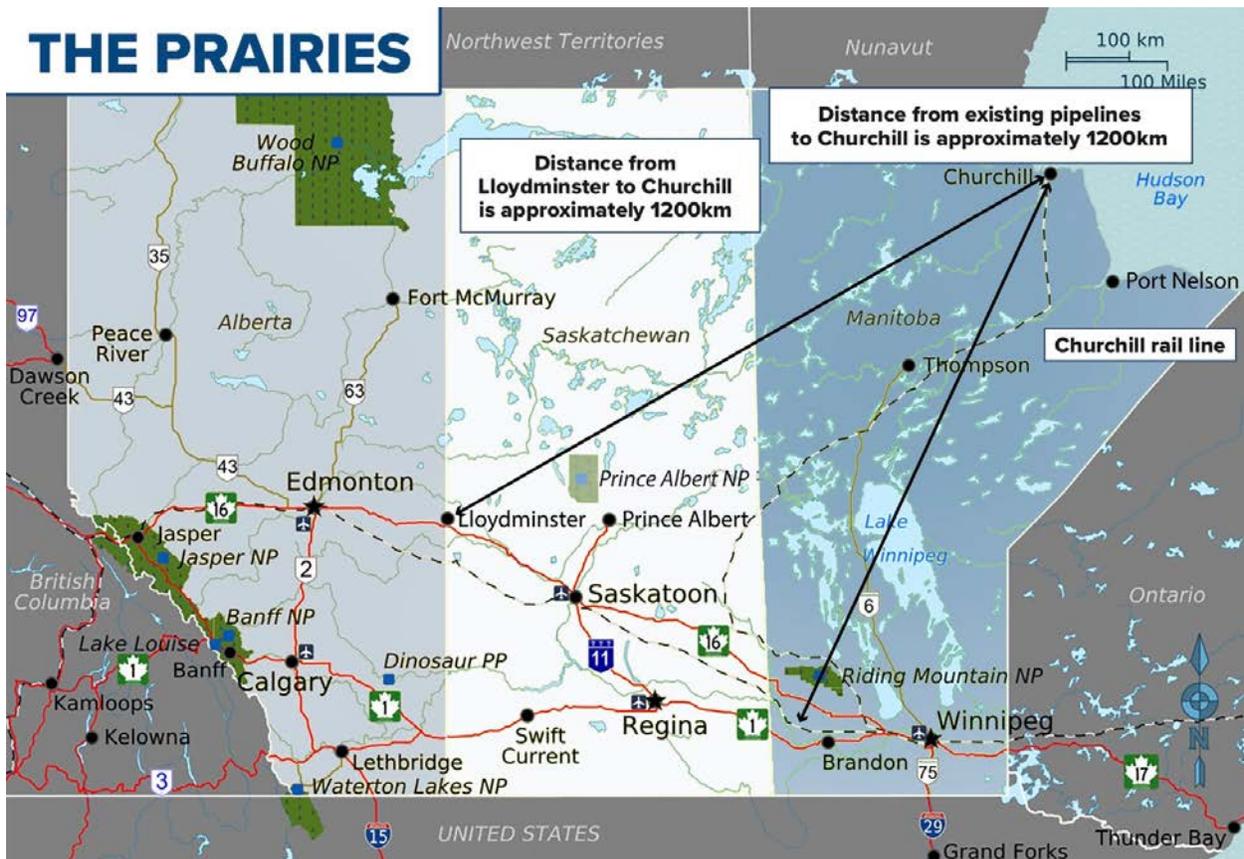
As nations around the world shift to stronger nationalist positions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada too must look out for its own interests. We must stop relying on other countries in matters of national importance. Energy independence is a decision of national importance.

The United States will continue to be a major trading partner for Canada but we must take steps to become more self-reliant. This starts with understanding the regulatory and social environment that Alberta's oil and gas industry currently operates in.

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Bill C-69 (no more pipelines) and Bill C-48 (tanker ban) enacted by the current Liberal government have created a poor investment climate in the oil and gas industry. The cancellation of Energy East and Enbridge Northern Gateway were both tied to these Bills. Critics will state that neither project was economically viable. This however is false. Global oil demand continues to remain strong, and has rebounded quickly after a significant decline due to wide scale shutdowns due to COVID-19.

Energy infrastructure projects that cross provincial borders are subject to regulatory review by the Canada Energy Regulator. This process is time consuming and overbearing. Given the current regulatory environment, Canadians (specifically Western Canadians) have two options. Continue to complain about said regulatory environment or think outside of the box to develop a new solution to get our most important resource to market. This is where “Freedom Pipeline” comes into play.



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Pipeline infrastructure currently exists to move Western Canadian oil from Fort McMurray, Alberta to Cromer, Manitoba. The “Freedom Pipeline” would build on this existing infrastructure and move oil from Cromer to Churchill, Manitoba. As this leg of the pipeline would be completed within Manitoba’s borders, it would not be subject to the Canada Energy Regulator (CER). This is supported by the July 26, 2019 decision by the National Energy Board (now CER) in relation to the Coastal GasLink Pipeline in British Columbia.

In order to proceed with this pipeline, the National Coalition of Chiefs should be immediately consulted so as to maximize the opportunities for First Nations communities throughout Manitoba. This should include discussions around the inclusion of First Nations owned businesses in the construction of the pipeline as well as an ownership stake in order to defeat on-reserve poverty.

Modern technology should be used to construct, protect and operate the pipeline. These include:

1. Pipeline leak detection and containment system.
2. Equipping oil tankers, moving through the Hudson Bay, with double-hull tanks and with Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) for propulsion.
3. Commitment to operate the pipeline with renewable resources within a reasonable timeline and when economically viable.

In addition to providing good paying jobs to First Nations communities along the pipeline route and to Western Canadian oilfield workers, this pipeline will bring significant benefits to other Canadians. Jobs within Ontario’s steel industry would be created. Refinery positions would be created on Canada’s east coast, a region that is desperately in need of private sector investment and growth. Engineering and other professional service positions would be created as well. All of these jobs provide the dignity of work to the individuals who secure them and hope for a brighter future for their children.

What happens if the Liberal government enacts legislation to ban tanker traffic in the Hudson Bay and ultimately the route to refineries on the east coast? If this were to occur, Western provinces would immediately need to make a decision about their ongoing position in Confederation. If a tanker ban was enacted, Western provinces should exercise all available actions to secure autonomy. This would include exploring provincial pensions and referendums on equalization payments. The next step would be to explore options for separation.

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Western provinces cannot continually be expected to be a part of a Confederation that doesn't allow their industries to get products to market, families to provide for their children and communities to support the vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged our economy. Governments have spent hundreds of billions in response. We are faced with difficult decisions on how to secure our future. The "Freedom Pipeline" provides a quality option to secure paycheques for thousands of Canadians and bring hope back to our great country. It's time to get to work.

Sincerely,

Jared Pilon
Libertarian Party Candidate for Red Deer – Mountain View, AB