



April 16, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
U.S. House of the Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
U.S. House of the Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman,

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, I am writing you in strong support of H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act. NFIB is especially pleased that H.R. 3 is introduced with strong bipartisan support.

The cost of energy remains one of the top concerns of small business owners, who rely on affordable energy to operate their businesses successfully. According to the 2012 edition of NFIB's *Small Business Problems and Priorities*, "Cost of Natural Gas, Propane, Gasoline, Diesel, Fuel Oil" ranked as the third-most important priority among NFIB's members.ⁱ Nearly 35 percent of respondents cited energy costs as a "critical" issue to their business.

Furthermore, according to NFIB's *Energy Consumption* poll, energy costs are one of the top three business expenses in 35 percent of small businesses.ⁱⁱ Providing more affordable energy will directly help small businesses reduce the impact high energy prices have on their business.

Accordingly, NFIB also supports the findings in the Administration's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which found there to be little – if any – additional environmental impact from construction of the Keystone XL pipeline connecting existing pipelines in Nebraska to plentiful crude oil resources in Canada and the northern United States. From there, this oil can be sent to refineries in the Gulf Coast for processing.

While NFIB urges President Obama to grant this project a presidential permit, even with such a permit there would still remain the potential for further regulatory and legal delays. H.R. 3 would address these issues by ensuring the pipeline will move forward in compliance with current law, including National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and judicial review.

NFIB believes construction of this 875-mile portion of the pipeline is important for reducing America's reliance of foreign energy and helping to lower the cost of fuels small businesses use every day. In addition, the project has the potential to create thousands of jobs that will help create and support small businesses in communities where the jobs are created.

NFIB strongly urges committee passage of H.R. 3. We look forward to working with you on this and other important to small business issues as the 113th Congress continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Eckerly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Susan Eckerly
Senior Vice President
Public Policy

cc: members of the committee

ⁱ *Small Business Problems and Priorities*. NFIB Research Foundation. 2012.

<http://www.nfib.com/research-foundation/priorities>

ⁱⁱ *NFIB National Small Business Poll: Energy Consumption*. NFIB Research Foundation. 2006.

<http://411sbfacts.com/files/EnergyConsumption%5B1%5D.pdf>