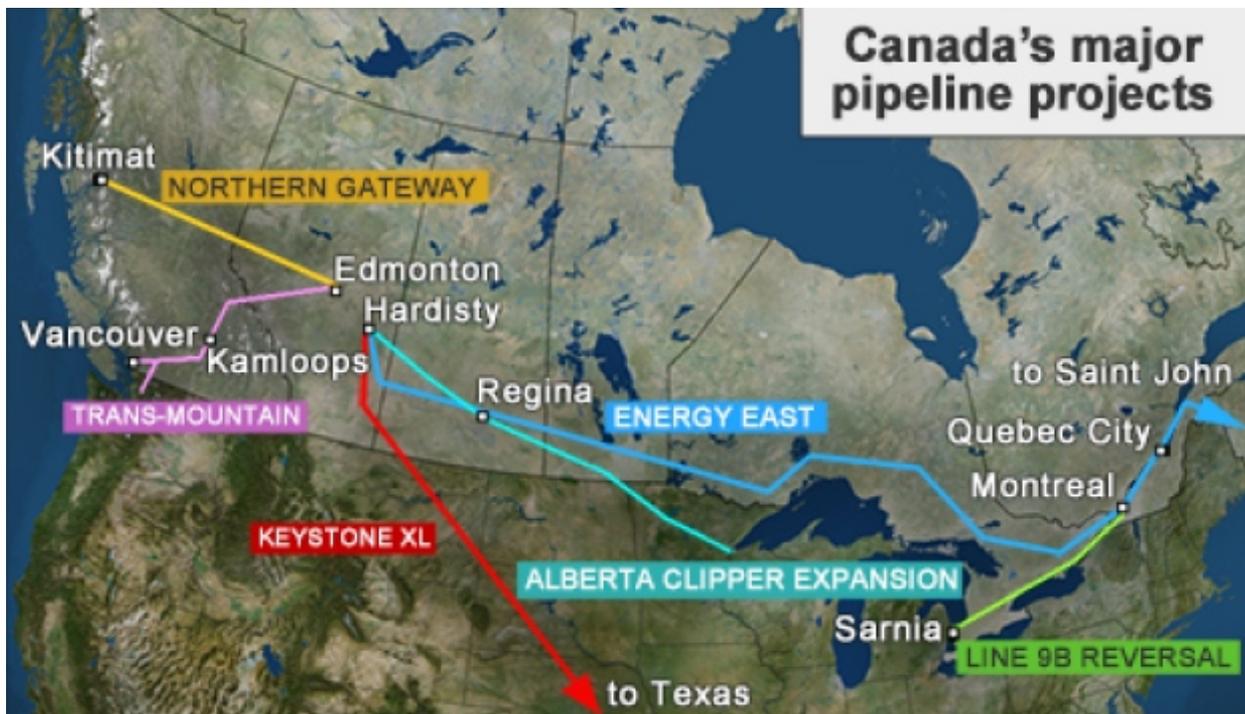




## 2016-2017 Research Package

### Topic 1

**THBT expanding oil pipeline infrastructure is an utmost priority for Canada**



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This Research booklet is not complete. It is only an overview of information and good debaters will use this booklet as a basis for their thinking and move on to other ideas and research. As well, the best foundation for any research into a topic begins with some basic reading on the ideas. Follow this with an interview with someone who is knowledgeable, can suggest ideas and can direct you to other ideas and research. Although you cannot quote this person unless he/she is published in print or on video, a human being can always explain issues better than an article.

## **Overview**

Energy is critical foundation of the modern world. The International Energy Agency captures the essence of this claim perfectly when it states that “access to modern energy is essential for the provision of clean water, sanitation and healthcare and for the provision of reliable and efficient lighting, heating, cooking, mechanical power, transport and telecommunications services”, in its summary of the World Energy Outlook. It is important to consider where energy comes from, its consumption, and how it gets to where it needs to be. The topic for debate concerns Canada, its oil resources, and the infrastructure used to transport these resources. Currently, there are four major proposals to expand Canada’s pipeline infrastructure and Alberta is the centre of attention for each. The four high profile proposals from over the last few years are the Northern Gateway, Trans Mountain, Energy East, and Keystone XL pipelines. All of these pipelines have their own benefits and detriments to Alberta specifically but also Canada as a whole. Your role as a debater is to argue the merits of these ideas and convince the judges that your position is the stronger of the two.

## **Definitions**

When defining terms, the proposition team should always consider whether the definitions provided are reasonable. Are they correct, complete, and fair? The best way to check if the definitions are reasonable is to consider whether the proposition, opposition, and the judges would all agree that the definitions provided are sufficient.

The first terms to define are the “house” and “Canada”. It is clear that Canada is the focus of the motion and it should be the house for this debate. The proposition team should be defining Canada so that it considers all groups of people in Canada rather than a single component of the country such as just the government or Canadian businesses. It is important to realize that Canada is not homogenous. The country consists of many individuals and groups of people with very different priorities and beliefs. During the debate, both the proposition and the opposition will need to consider each group of people and how they are impacted by pipeline expansion and possibly balance them against each other.

The second term to define is “expand”. In this context it means to build and add to Canada’s network of oil pipelines.

The third term to define is “oil pipeline infrastructure”. These three words should be defined as a whole. You can do this by using the definitions of each individual word as building blocks. When referring to oil you may refer to unprocessed crude oil and/or processed petroleum.

The final term to define is “utmost priority”. The definition should convey that the issue at hand is of great importance. Keep in mind that debaters should not be arguing whether another unrelated issue is more important.

# Key Ideas

## Resource Ownership

- In Canada, natural resources are mostly owned by provincial governments which is distinctly separate from land ownership. The federal government does have rights over resources in the territories and offshore regions. In order to extract resources from the environment, provincial governments either rely on crown corporations or leases the extraction rights to private corporations. In the second scenario the government will collect royalties from the private corporation. For more information, look under resource rights in the Canadian Encyclopedia.
- The majority of oil reserves and oil extraction in Canada exists in Alberta. Saskatchewan and Newfoundland & Labrador are lesser but still substantial producers of oil. The other provinces may have some oil reserves and production but it is less substantial than the three mentioned provinces. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers has a province-by-province breakdown on their website under “Industry Across Canada”.
- On the whole, Canada is the worlds fifth largest crude oil producer and the third largest crude oil exporter in the world. Canada also has the third largest crude oil reserves in the world. Obviously, this makes Canada one of the more significant actors on the world stage. The CIA World Factbook contains extensive data but easy to find data on Canada’s resources and where it ranks globally.

## Federalism

- Canada has a federal system of government meaning that power and responsibility are divided over a countrywide federal government and individual provincial governments.
- Canadians have varying perspectives on the ideal degree of centralism in Canada. Those in favour of centralism believe provinces should operate in the interest of the country as a whole. Those in favour of the opposite believe provinces should hold their own interests above the interests of other provinces. The Canadian Encyclopedia also has a good section on federalism.
- The difficulty of building pipelines between different provinces or countries is that each party must agree that the proposal has benefits and detriments that are fair to both. Three of the four pipeline proposals from above have faced resistance because every impacted province does not believe that the balance of individual benefits and harms is weighed properly.
- Debaters will need to decide whether Canadians as a collective is better off even when some provinces stand to benefit more than others. Debaters may want to consider if equalization payments between provinces are effective at diminishing the concern over some provinces enjoying a disproportionate amount of benefits from pipeline projects.



## **Transportation and Safety**

- Pipelines are not the only way to transport crude oil and petroleum. There are three major alternatives: trains, trucks, and tankers.
- Each have their own unique dangers. Pipeline leaks tend to spill more oil into the environment when they occur compared to spills from trucks or trains. However, destruction to property and loss of human life tend to be higher for the pipeline alternatives because of the higher chance of catastrophic explosions. Riverkeeper (New York) compiled a list of crude oil related disasters for trains, tankers, and pipelines on their website.
- The magnitude of these dangers may be considered small or large depending on how each team frames the issue. Pipelines may be considered safer or more dangerous than the alternatives; each team may say Canada should increase reliance on the safer method. Of course opposition may also take the stance that all transportation methods are dangerous and that infrastructure for all methods should be reduced.

## **Environmental Issues and Energy Alternatives**

- Fossil fuel consumption is a source of pollution which damages ecosystems and their inhabitants. The oil sands are a carbon sink. Not extracting oil keeps carbon in the ground instead of in the air or the environment. The oil sands have been dubbed the “tar sands” because of how dirty it is compared to other oil sources. Expanding pipeline infrastructure will surely increase how much oil is extracted and consumed from the oil sands.
- The increased availability of crude oil lessens by expanding pipeline infrastructure lessens the necessity for alternative energy sources. Green technology like solar panels or windmills are far better for the environment but need more development in order to reliably occupy a larger percentage of the power grid. Necessity spurs development which is seen when energy prices are high. Even nuclear may be better for the environment because nuclear waste products are more easily captured and stored and hydro can also be argued as better for the environment than fossil fuels too because there are no waste products (even if it has its own problems).
- Of course the needs of the environment must still be balanced against economic needs.

## **Economic Concerns**

- The pipeline infrastructure in Canada is serving as a bottleneck for exporting Albertan oil. Alberta is a land locked province so it lacks the ability to ship oil from its own ports. Alberta needs to use ports in British Columbia or Eastern Canada in order to access emerging markets in Asia across the Pacific Ocean or established markets in Europe across the Atlantic Ocean. Pipelines would need to be built in order to connect Alberta with those ports.
- Canada’s economy will perform better next time the United States goes through a recession like the one seen in 2008. This is because Canada won’t solely rely on the United States as its only buyer of crude oil.
- Expanding crude oil production would mean more royalties are collected and more jobs are created. Governments could use more royalties to pay for more services that benefit Canadian citizens and jobs ensure that more people can participate in the economy.
- Stagnating oil production or even decreasing it on the supply side will not necessarily decrease demand worldwide. Even if Canada stops extracting from the oil sands, oil extracted from other sources will not

stop. If Canada does not produce and sell its oil another country would be happy to sell their oil in Canada's place.

- The price of oil has been low since 2014 when OPEC produced a glut of oil with the intention of protecting its market share and cause expensively produced oil sources to become unprofitable. The returns on a pipeline built now aren't as high as they would have been two and a half years ago.
- Canada's economy and especially Alberta's needs to diversify so building pipelines is counter to that goal.

## **First Nations' Land Claims and Rights**

- Several proposed routes for new pipelines encroach and have impact upon First Nations' land. Many would argue that provincial governments and oil & gas companies have not properly consulted with First Nations' Reservations when considering new pipelines.
- In 2014, a Supreme Court decision supports the idea that the purpose of consultation is to seek consent. Research the Tsilhqot'in to find more information. In the same year the UN declaration on indigenous people recommended free, prior, and informed consent when planning development projects.
- Different First Nations will have different perspectives and views on how pipeline projects should be executed because they are not homogenous. Some would agree that part ownership stakes in oil & gas projects could financially benefit impoverished First Nations. While others would say that pipeline projects infringe upon their land rights which cannot be compensated for through financial means.



# Where to start?

Debatepedia includes a debate on the Keystone XL database in its database. Take a look there to see some of the arguments made by both sides of the debate.

<http://debatepedia.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate: Keystone XL US-Canada oil pipeline>

Research each of the 4 major pipelines proposed (Northern Gateway, Trans Mountain, Energy East, and Keystone XL pipelines) and see what caused each of these proposals to be such contentious issues.

Take a look at <http://aboutpipelinesmap.com/> to see an interactive map of pipelines in Canada.

Here are some websites referenced to make this research package.

<http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/resources/energydevelopment/>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/resource-rights/>

<http://www.capp.ca/canadian-oil-and-natural-gas/industry-across-canada>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ca.html>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/federalism/>

<http://www.riverkeeper.org/campaigns/river-ecology/crude-oil-transport/crude-oil-transportation-a-timeline-of-failure/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/blaine-favel-first-nations-pipelines-veto-1.3476221>