

Air Quality & Hydrogen Sulfide Concerns for the Keystone XL Pipeline

- Ninety percent of the refining for the proposed Keystone XL pipeline will likely occur in Port Arthur and Houston, an area already plagued with poor air quality. If the Keystone XL expansion is built, Houston and Gulf Coast residents can expect to see an increase in the kind of air pollution that leads to these serious health problems. ¹
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) did not address the public health effects of refining the heavy tar sands crude. ² This was a serious omission since tar sands crude is heavier than conventional crude and has higher levels of sulfur, nitrogen, and heavy metals – including lead, nickel, mercury, and arsenic. ³
- This pipeline would contain hydrogen sulfide gas in a concentration so dense and toxic that it could kill anyone who came in contact with it, including affected landowners. ⁴
- Hydrogen sulfide is a potent neurotoxin at low concentrations and adversely affects the brain, breathing and heart activity. Health effects include changes in brain density, headache, memory loss, reduced sense of smell, loss of balance, dizziness, sleep difficulties, and fatigue. ⁵



Inquiries?

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1. <http://www.sierraclub.org/dirtyfuels/tar-sands/report.aspx#11>
2. <http://www.keystonepipeline-xl.state.gov/clientsite/keystonexl.nsf?Open>
3. http://dirtyoilsands.org/files/NRDC_TarSandsBitumen.pdf
4. https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.1&thid=12d75da4bdec4e1&mt=application/pdf&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui%3D2%26ik%3Dfda25f058d%26view%3Datt%26th%3D12d75da4bdec4e1%26attid%3D0.1%26disp%3Datt%26realattid%3Da4fe87c42408a151_0.1%26zw&sig=AHIEtbTlJ31FdMlhbYVr2dwfuymo1kHgQw
5. Kilburn, KH. Evaluating health effects from exposure to hydrogen sulfide: central nervous system dysfunction. Environ Epidemiol Toxicol 1999;1:207-17. Legator, MS, and C Singleton: Panel on Hydrogen Sulfide, Am Public Health Association, November 11, 1997, Indianapolis, In.