

*Note: In July 2012, Michigan residents Kathryn Bodenmiller and Jeffrey Insko wrote to U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) about their concerns for the new Enbridge 6B pipeline. Bodenmiller and Insko forwarded the resulting email exchange to InsideClimate News on Oct. 14, 2012. Their street address has been redacted to protect their privacy.*

[First letter from Bodenmiller and Insko, sent through the "contact us" form on the senator's website on July 10, 2012]:

The irony is not lost on my husband and I that today -- the day that we agreed to a settlement with Enbridge-- is also the day that the NTSB announced its findings. Our settlement is not for the destruction already done in Marshall, but for the destruction set to begin this month with the 6B "replacement" construction project. And the more we learn (the NTSB findings are only a little salt in an otherwise already painful wound), the more we feel like nobody -- not a single person -- has had our interests at heart. In fact, I just learned (and feel stupid that I never bothered to look before) that the MPSC is THREE PEOPLE -- APPOINTEES of governors -- which seems inconceivable to me.

THREE APPOINTEES were the only ones responsible for allowing a foreign corporation to sidestep federal oversight in order to construct a pipeline that will allow them to pump larger volumes at higher speeds across a state whose most valuable asset is the very thing that such pipelines destroy. I don't want to sound the hysteric, but you can understand our frustration. Enbridge IGNORED CRACKS in a pipeline that lead to the MOST EXPENSIVE SPILL ON US SOIL . . . and yet the MPSC gave them everything they wanted, including permission to avoid any REAL SCRUTINY or oversight.

You should know, as my senator, that Enbridge proceeded to see the MSPC approval as permission to cajole, threaten, coerce, and disrespect affected landowners. Their hired-gun third-party salespeople from places like Arkansas, Kentucky, and Texas are the most cynical people I've ever met. Why else would they offer one land owner one per-acre price and the next a different price? They do so knowing that we have no recourse but to sign, bellyache, or call a lawyer (and risk looking like a greedy s.o.b.).

So, the oversight and protection that SHOULD be the job of public officials is now left to private lawyers paid for by private citizens. Seriously? In addition to spending the past six months working very hard (to no avail) to convince Enbridge that the 100+ evergreens and flowering ornamentals that create an wind/sound/visual barrier are worth a lot more to us than timber prices they want to pay . . . I now have to pay a lawyer to convince Enbridge to NOT burn green timber and shrubs on my property? I have to pay a lawyer to force Enbridge to vow not to work past 7pm or before 7am (because we all know [including

Enbridge] that local ordinances are toothless in rural areas with no enforcement authorities)? Or not to allow firearms or loud music on my property; or pick up trash or control the dust or put a closing date on the lease agreement? These are all reasonable expectations. And I have to pay someone to argue my case for me because nobody else will do so on my behalf. And that is truly demoralizing. But to then find out that the people who set this nightmare in motion are appointees that number only three is nothing short of infuriating. I love you, but you guys totally dropped the ball on this one.

Sincerely, Katy Bodenmiller  
Groveland Township, MI

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# United States Senate

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U. S. Senator Debbie Stabenow  
MICHIGAN

July 19, 2012

Kathryn Bodenmiller



Holly, MI 48442

Dear Kathryn,

Thank you for contacting me about the Keystone XL Pipeline project. I understand your concerns.

Our nation's dependence on foreign oil must end. There isn't just one solution to this problem. I strongly support a "do it all" approach that encourages investments in multiple sources of energy, including new and safe domestic oil and gas supplies, as well as critical renewable sources of energy.

I support the Keystone pipeline, with the important requirement that the oil pumped into our country stay here in America to benefit American consumers and businesses, and not be shipped to other countries in order to increase oil company profits. When gas prices here at home continue to rise, it makes no sense to build a costly pipeline through the heartland of our nation in order to lower gas prices for families in other countries like China! Unfortunately, the common-sense amendment that I supported to move forward on the Keystone pipeline and keep the oil in America failed in the Senate.

Thank you again for contacting me. Please continue to keep me informed about issues of concern to you and your family.

Sincerely,  
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow  
The United States Senate • Washington, DC 20510  
[stabenow.senate.gov](http://stabenow.senate.gov)

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[July 22, 2012]

Dear Senator Stabenow (or whichever staffer reads, poorly, her email)-

There is no need to thank me for contacting you about the Keystone XL pipeline project since I did NOT, in fact, contact you about anything having to do with Keystone whatsoever. I contacted you about the ENBRIDGE LINE 6B PIPELINE PROJECT in Michigan-- the state you are elected to represent! And while it is true that both of them are "pipelines," I assure you that they are quite distinct.

Based on the thoughtless form letter you sent to us (are these things somehow generated automatically any time you receive something with the word "pipeline" in it?), you most certainly do NOT understand my concerns. And frankly, your response makes me doubt the sincerity of

your invitation to "keep [you] informed about issues of concern" to me and my family.

Indeed, if your response weren't so embarrassing (to your office) and insulting (to us), it would be laughable. It is a perfect illustration of why so many Americans have lost confidence in those who are supposed to represent their interests; it also demonstrates why congressional approval ratings are so low.

I understand that you likely receive mountains of correspondence and simply don't have time to read it all personally-- and you probably won't read this. However, you do sign your name to replies such as the one I received. And presumably, you pay staff members to ensure that the replies that are sent under your name are not insulting to your constituents and do not reflect shamefully on you and your office. Yet I am disheartened to report that that is precisely the case with the reply sent to us by some incompetent staff member of yours.

Sincerely yours,  
Kathryn Bodenmiller & Jeffrey Insko

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On Jul 25, 2012, at 5:14 PM, Senator Debbie Stabenow wrote:

**United States Senate**

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U. S. Senator Debbie Stabenow  
MICHIGAN

July 25, 2012

Kathryn Bodenmiller



Holly, MI 48442

Dear Kathryn,

Thank you for contacting me about pipeline safety. I share your concerns.

With nearly half a million miles of natural gas and oil pipelines around the country, it is important that our pipelines are safe and will protect our families and environment from hazardous materials. As you know, a major underground oil pipeline in Michigan failed and leaked nearly 1 million gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River. While cleanup efforts have been successful, this tragic event demonstrates the importance of updating safety standards within our national pipeline transportation system.

In the past, several Senators have introduced legislation which would update our nation's pipeline safety standards and response plans. I will keep your position about this issue in mind should similar legislation come before me in the Senate.

Thank you again for contacting me. Please continue to keep me informed about issues of concern to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Debbie Stabenow

United States Senator

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow

The United States Senate • Washington, DC 20510

[stabenow.senate.gov](http://stabenow.senate.gov)