

Bold Report

**LIUNA Partners with
Anti-Union Forces, AFP and ALEC
Advocating with Koch Money for Risky
Keystone XL Tarsands Pipeline**



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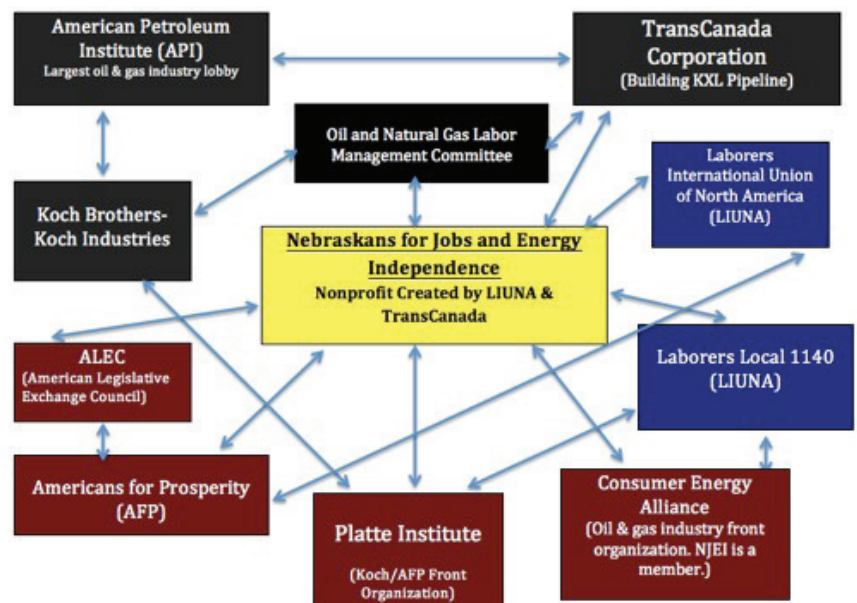
Since 2010, the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) has partnered with several anti-union organizations that are funded by the Koch brothers along with TransCanada to gain approval of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Many construction unions partner with industry to win approval for projects and secure work for their members; this is often appropriate and productive.

However, the industry and political partnerships that LIUNA has forged to gain approval of Keystone XL (KXL) seriously undermines workers' rights and unions' strength, and display a complete lack of concern for the broader labor movement or even the longer-term interests of LIUNA members.

In fact, their partnerships with the fossil fuel industry and far right political groups, namely Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity (AFP) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), contribute to the vicious attacks on workers, unions and democracy.

LIUNA's Partnerships with Koch-Funded Americans for Prosperity, ALEC and the Oil & Gas Industry Around the Keystone XL Pipeline



Explanation of LIUNA's Partnerships with Koch-Funded Americans for Prosperity, ALEC and the Oil and Gas Industry

- **TransCanada and Koch:** TransCanada and Koch Industries' subsidiaries have a number of overlapping relations, including interconnected board of directors and interconnected financial interests. Koch currently processes about 25% of tar sands oil, and is expected to refine a significant portion of tar oil from KXL. Both Koch and TransCanada are members the American Petroleum Institute (API). Koch Industries also sits on the board of ALEC.¹
- **LIUNA and NJEI:** LIUNA Local 1140 and TransCanada partner to establish *Nebraskans for Jobs and Energy Independence (NJEI)* to advocate for the Keystone XL pipeline. Local 1140 Business Manager, Ron Kaminski, serves as President and member of the three-member board of directors. NJEI's line has been: construction of KXL would create tens of thousands of jobs, despite a number of reputable studies proving this untrue.²
- **TransCanada and NJEI:** On the three-member NJEI Board with LiUNA leader Ron Kaminski is Beth Jensen, Director of Government Relations for TransCanada and an American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) Task Force member, and Joseph D. Kohout, a TransCanada lobbyist whose firm has spent almost \$1million in lobbying Nebraska elected officials. Kohout also acts as Secretary-Treasurer for NJEI. They use shared powerpoints swapping out logos at "education" forums. Typically with a 501c4 nonprofit, the board cannot profit from the goals of the organization. Clearly TransCanada, Kissel Lobby Firm and Liuna would all profit calling into question their tax status.³
- **LIUNA and TransCanada:** LIUNA International uses NJEI and Ron Kaminski (Business Manager of 1140 and President of NJEI) as its main lobbying tool in support of the Keystone XL pipeline hosting dinners and "education" forums.⁴
- **NJEI and Americans for Prosperity:** NJEI consistently undertakes joint activities with Americans for Prosperity; AFP is an anti-union organizations funded by the Koch brothers and Koch Industries. These joint activities include pro-Keystone XL public meetings, rallies, press conferences and even co-sponsoring an all-expenses-paid trip to the Nebraska KXL State Department hearing.⁵

- **NJEI and Platte Institute:** NJEI and LIUNA undertake joint activities with Platte Institute; Platte Institute is an anti-union think-tank in Nebraska that is commonly known as a front institute for Americans for Prosperity and the Koch brothers. Together, NJEI and Platte have organized pro-Keystone XL public meetings and rallies. NJEI and LIUNA (via Kaminski in his role as Business Manager of LIUNA Local 1140) partner with Platte on articles about KXL. LIUNA has posted articles on the Platte site, alongside virulent anti-union pieces.⁶
- **NJEI and American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC):** Beth Jensen, one of the founders and board members of NJEI (the LIUNA-TransCanada organization) is also a Natural Resources Task Force member for ALEC, and attends their annual meetings along with representatives from the Americans for Prosperity and the American Petroleum Institute.⁷
- **API, AFP and ALEC:** The American Petroleum Institute (API) provides funding to Americans for Prosperity and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and all three organizations work together to promote extraction of North American oil and gas, a rollback of environmental regulation and attacks on union and workers' rights. API's largest political donations in 2011-2012 were to legislators who have voted against working family/union issues over 80% of the time during their political careers. In addition to financially supporting ALEC, API, TransCanada (Beth Jensen) and Americans for Prosperity all attend ALEC's annual meetings and are represented on ALEC's Natural Resources committee.⁸
- **TransCanada and ALEC:** In addition to TransCanada representatives, like Beth Jensen, sitting on ALEC committees, TransCanada also hired James Dunlap and Patrick Hall of Majority Plus to lobby for KXL. Dunlap has served on the board of ALEC.⁹
- **LIUNA and API:** LIUNA and other building trade unions forged a partnership with the oil and gas industry in 2009 to develop North American energy sources, via the Oil and Gas Industry Labor-Management Committee (OGILMC). Sean McGarvey, President of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, is President of the OGILMC and Jack Gerard, President of the American Petroleum Institute, is Secretary-Treasurer. At the birth of Occupy Wall Street, LIUNA and the Building Trades joined forces with the oil and gas industry (the 1%), via OGILMC, to produce "Jobs for the 99%," a series of ads that used the rhetoric of Occupy Wall Street and the 99% to advocate for the construction of KXL. Soon after these ads were released, OWS released a statement condemning LIUNA's co-optation of OWS and the 99%.¹⁰

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- **NJEI and Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA):** NJEI became a member of CEA in 2011 and has actively advocated for KXL in partnership with CEA, including co-sponsoring meetings and collectively gathering and submitting pro-KXL comments to the State Department.¹¹ CEA is not a consumer organization as it claims to be – it is a front group for the oil and gas industry, funded by the American Petroleum Institute and founded by a lobbying firm (HBW Resources) that works for the oil and gas industry.¹² Michael Whatley is an oil lobbyist for HBW Resources but also acts as Executive Vice President for CEA. Whatley and NJEI (via LIUNA Local Leader Kaminski) team up regularly to advocate for KXL. Whatley also works with ALEC and the Heartland Institute.¹³

Will LiUNA Fight for Workers, Unions and Democracy or Fight Alongside Koch, AFP and ALEC?

Proponents of KXL have described the construction of the pipeline as a fight for energy security and jobs. But KXL is much more than a fight over one pipeline project. As U.S. energy demand levels off and supplies of easy-to-access conventional oil dwindle, the only way the fossil fuel industry can grow and expand its political power is by supplying highly-polluting, risky-to-extract fossil fuels to energy markets outside the U.S.

In short, the oil industry and the Koch brothers need KXL to expand the tar sands and increase their profits. As a result, the fight around KXL has serious implications for democracy, workers and unions in the U.S. It is a fight over how much power the fossil fuel industry will have in American politics. If the fossil fuel industry wins, they aren't just expanding extreme forms of fossil fuels at the expense of workers, communities, farmers, indigenous people, and the environment, they will expand their control over U.S. politics, repress democracy, deepen social and economic inequality, and destroy unions.

Therefore, unions' role in this debate marks a choice between moving democracy and power into the control of wealthy, corporate hands or moving democracy and power towards workers, unions, and communities across the United States.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Koch serves on the board of ALEC: http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=ALEC_Corporations-Corporate_Board

Koch Industries and the Koch brothers have a huge financial stake in the construction of the KXL pipeline: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/05/koch-keystone-xl-pipeline>

- ² Nonprofit Corporation Biennial Report, State of Nebraska, No. 10140228. Filed April 2, 2011.

- ³ Beth Jensen is Director of Government Relations for TransCanada, <http://www.slideshare.net/ptpblog/mondak-energy-alliance-agenda>

Jensen also has served on ALEC's Natural Resources Task Force: http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BF7B3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/energy,environment&agriculture_35-day_mailing_San_Diego.pdf

Joseph Kohaut, Secretary-Treasurer of TransCanada-LIUNA organization, NJEI, has been hired by both TransCanada and American Petroleum Institute to lobby for KXL as well as other aspects of the oil and gas industry's agenda.

- ⁴ While NJEI is formally underwritten by a Nebraska local union, the organization has been the main advocacy vehicle on KXL for the international union as well. All of LIUNA International's KXL materials link to NJEI, the TransCanada-LIUNA organization. For example, <http://www.liunabuildsamerica.org/files/INSIDE/November2011INSIDEIBA.pdf>; <http://www.lecet.org/mura/lecet/index.cfm/resources/blog/the-good-jobs-blockade/>

- ⁵ Americans for Prosperity and NJEI co-organize a pro-KXL rally, held at LIUNA Local 1140 headquarters: <http://www.facebook.com/AFPNebraska>. Joint NJEI-AFP workshop: <http://americansforprosperity.org/nebraska/legislativealerts/afp-participates-in-kxl-open-house-in-york>
- AFP, with a budget of over \$40 million, was created and financed in part by Charles G. and David H. Koch. (<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/americans-for-prosperity-begins-25-million-anti-obama-ad-campaign/>) Over the last several years, AFP has backed anti-union and anti-worker efforts in numerous states, including in Wisconsin, where AFP fought to slash union benefits and collective bargaining rights and the Koch brothers made one of the largest contributions to the gubernatorial election campaign of Scott Walker. (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/us/22koch.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) AFP has also moved the Koch brothers agenda to combat regulation and promote fiscal conservatism in numerous states; an agenda that leads to lay-offs, reductions in much needed social spending for working families, and that weakens the government's role in regulating for worker health and safety. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/us/22koch.html?pagewanted=all>)

LIUNA's alliance with AFP is equally baffling in light of the last election – unions, including LIUNA, spent over \$13 million to elect President Obama, while AFP spent \$25 million on anti-Obama election ads, and a far larger amount towards the election campaigns of Republican candidates. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/07/labor-unions-deliver-for-obama_n_2089430.html; <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/americans-for-prosperity-begins-25-million-anti-obama-ad-campaign/>)

AFP fought the health care law that President Obama and nearly all unions worked to implement in order to provide more affordable, quality healthcare. (<http://americansforprosperity.org/issues/healthcare-entitlements/>; <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2012/11/11858/will-gop-governors-really-try-nullifying-obamacare>).

AFP was also one of the main organizations behind the attacks on President Obama's Green Jobs czar, Van Jones – a labor ally and guest speaker at numerous LIUNA sponsored Good Jobs, Green Jobs conferences (AFP's role in smearing President Obama's Green Jobs Czar is cited in numerous sources, including in AFP's own documents: http://americansforprosperity.org/files/green_jobs.pdf; Other sources: <http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2009/09/whats-really-behind-van-jones-attack>; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brendan-smith/afl-cio-convention-solid_a_b_283406.html; http://www.americanrightsatwork.org/dmdocuments/clearinghouse_resources/koch_report_mar_3_final.pdf)

- ⁶ “Nebraska’s Workers Need Keystone XL,” September, 21, 2011, written by Ron Kaminski for Platte Institute website: <http://platteinstitute.org/blog/detail/nebraska-workers-need-keystone-xl>

When Ron Kaminski, LIUNA Local 1140 leader and President of TransCanada-LIUNA organization, NJEI, posts articles in support of KXL on the Platte Institute website, they often appear immediately next to anti-union articles, such as “Support Employee Rights Act...Big Labor is trying to rig the rules,” Obama finalizes new draconian fuel standards” (standards that LIUNA's fellow union, UAW, worked hard to implement), and “End wind energy subsidies now, let the energy market work” (subsidies that the United Steelworkers have warned would cost thousands of jobs if removed). (“Support Employee Rights Act...Big Labor is trying to rig the rules”: <http://prosperityactions.com/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx%3Fc=5oJELSPwFhJWG&b=6074153&aid=518852>; <http://americansforprosperity.org/legislativealerts/obama-administration-finalizes-new-draconian-fuel-standards/>; UAW supports Obama's fuel economy standards, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/19/us-usa-labor-idUSTRE76I3GU20110719>; <http://prosperityactions.com/siteapps/advocacy/ActionItem.aspx%3Fc=5oJELSPwFhJWG&b=6074153&aid=517814%3B>

- ⁷ Beth Jensen serves on ALEC's Natural Resources Task Force: http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/energy,environment&agriculture_35-day_mailing_San_Diego.pdf

Representatives of Americans for Prosperity and the American Petroleum Institute also sit on ALEC's Natural Resources Task Force and attend its annual meetings: http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/energy,environment&agriculture_35-day_mailing_San_Diego.pdf

- ⁸ American Petroleum Institute's 2012 Election Spending, including contributions to ALEC and AFP: <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2012/03/energy-industry-trade-groups.html>; http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=American_Petroleum_Institute; <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/11/30/1262021/how-the-big-oil-lobby-secretly-funded-2012-election-attack-ads/>

- ⁹ Dunlap was hired by TransCanada to lobby for KXL; he has also served on the board of ALEC: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-sunlight-foundation/transcanada-spends-millio_b_1096075.html

- ¹⁰ <http://www.ongil-mc.org/about>

LIUNA and the Building Trades joined forces with the oil and gas industry (the 1%) to produce “Jobs for the 99%,” a series of ads that used the rhetoric of Occupy Wall Street and the 99% to advocate for the construction of KXL. The ads argued that Hollywood elites’ opposition to KXL, including from Danny Glover and Darryl Hannah, was intervening in politics and preventing the 99% from receiving jobs. Soon after these ads were released, OWS released a statement condemning LIUNA’s co-optation of OWS and the 99%.

“The leadership of the unions behind this campaign have made a public alliance with the oil industry and Tea Party funders,” the statement declares. “Big Oil and Tea Party billionaires are part of the 1% . The reference to the 99% is opportunistic and misleading. ... We must dissociate from this attempt at co-optation by the 1% to preserve our movement as the 99%, and as definitive precedent to dissuade future attempts of co-optation. (http://www.salon.com/2011/11/07/keystone_xl_splits_unions_and_occupy_wall_street/)

¹¹ NJEI, in conjunction with CEA, submits pro-KXL comments to the State Department: <http://www.jobsandenergy.org/newsitems/NebraskansSupportKXL.html>

Platte Institute, NJEI and CEA sponsor Nebraska Energy Future Meeting together on September 26, 2012: <http://nebraskaenergy.eventbrite.com/>

¹² CEA is front group for oil and gas industry and campaigns in support of right-wing, anti-union agenda on climate and energy issues: http://www.salon.com/2011/12/15/big_oil_and_canada_thwarted_u_s_carbon_standards/

¹³ Whatley writes for ALEC: http://www.alec.org/docs/Final_NovDec2011_IA

Whatley does podcast with Heartland Institute (Heartland is a member of ALEC and campaigns in support of the privatization of public services, school vouchers and deregulation of health care insurance): <http://heartland.org/policy-documents/alec-education-accountability-act>