

# PIPELINE OPPONENTS TAKE STANCE DOWNTOWN

## Urge Obama To Halt Keystone XL Project

Posted: February 4, 2014

By JONATHON SHACAT

**HARRISONBURG** — A few dozen people, braving the cold weather, gathered Monday night on Court Square for a candlelight vigil to protest against the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The State Department issued a final report Friday indicating no major environmental objections to constructing the proposed \$7 billion pipeline, which would run from Canada through the central United States.

The State Department's report is not a decision by itself, but puts the matter in the hands of President Barack Obama, who is faced with deciding whether to sign off on its construction.

In an effort to sway that decision, pipeline opponents held events across the country Monday to tell Obama to block the project. Harrisonburg's event, which took place on the sidewalk in front of the courthouse, made their opinions known through poetry, song and commentary.

"We, as a country, every one of us, are addicted to fossil fuel, and the president needs to say, 'enough.' If the tar sands oil is not dirty enough, then what will be?" said Leslie Grady, 75, of Harrisonburg.

Proponents of the pipeline on both sides of the border say the project would be an economic boon, and can be done without harming the environment.

Grady contends that while there will always be arguments over the economic impact of the pipeline, at some point Americans must begin the process of stopping their "addiction."

Participants held signs with slogans, including "Say No To Big Oil" and "KXL=Climate Change." One poster contained the message "There Is No Planet 'B'" with a drawing of a green-and-blue globe.

About 35 people attended the vigil. Turnout was significant, especially considering that organizers started planning the event just 24 hours earlier, said Ralph Grove, chairman of the



*Protesters expressed their opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline on Harrisonburg's Court Square on Monday night. The State Department issued a report Friday indicating no major environmental objections to the pipeline. Opponents of the pipeline want President Barack Obama to reject construction of the project. (Photo by Jonathon Shacat / DN-R)*

Shenandoah Group of the Sierra Club, the event's organizer.

“It gives me hope to see this many people come out to show their concern about this issue. But my bigger hope is that we ignite the flame of concern in other people through more actions like these and by our example of how we live,” said Heather Lantz, 36, of Harrisonburg, who participated in the event.

Contact Jonathon Shacat at 574-6286 or [jshacat@dnronline.com](mailto:jshacat@dnronline.com)