

Pipeline Conversion

About Pipeline Conversion

As part of the Energy East Pipeline Project, approximately 3,000 km of pipeline will be converted from natural gas to crude oil service (from Burstall, Saskatchewan to a point near Cornwall, Ontario).

TransCanada has safely and successfully converted pipelines throughout its 60 year history with the most recent example being the conversion of approximately 860 km of natural gas lines to crude oil service as part of the Keystone Pipeline Project. This pipeline conversion occurred on the TransCanada network from Burstall, Saskatchewan to a point near Portage La Prairie, Manitoba and has been safely delivering crude oil on our Keystone Pipeline System since 2010.

How We Do It: At a Glance

One of the key steps to converting a natural gas pipeline to crude oil service is conducting an engineering assessment. Engineering assessments help to confirm that a pipeline being considered for oil service is suitable for the conversion process as well as helping to identify any corrective measures that may be necessary to ensure the integrity of the pipeline itself. The assessment includes:

- A review of the pipeline's material, construction, and operating history to ensure suitability for liquid service;
- A thorough cleaning and in-line inspection process of the entire conversion section using high-resolution tools to inspect the quality of the pipeline inside and out;
- An identification and investigation process to capture any potential anomalies within the pipeline followed by further repairs if needed. Some repairs may be as simple as recoating the pipeline for further protection while others may involve replacing a joint of pipe if necessary.

TransCanada will then disconnect the pipeline from all links to other gas pipelines, compressor stations and other associated natural gas facilities. New facilities will then be added to the pipeline to allow it to transport oil.

The new facilities include a number of pump stations to push the crude oil along the pipeline, launcher and receiver traps to launch cleaning tools and high resolution inspection tools that will periodically inspect the line. Other facilities will include shut-off valves strategically placed along the pipeline to protect the surrounding environment.

During operations, the pipeline system will be monitored from the control room 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If a decrease in pressure is detected along the pipeline, the pump stations can be shut down from the control room and the shut-off valves can be closed automatically to stop the flow of oil in the pipeline within a matter of minutes to isolate the pipeline segment where the decrease in pressure has been detected.

TransCanada always follows the most stringent safety and engineering standards when it comes to its pipeline network and will work closely with federal and provincial regulators to comply with all regulatory requirements for the Energy East Pipeline.

Safety is a core value at TransCanada. We make safety – for ourselves, each other, our contractors and for members of our communities – an integral part of the way we work. The Energy East Pipeline will use the latest proven technology and techniques to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of crude oil, while working to reduce impacts to the land and environment.

Energy East Pipeline



Contact us

We encourage your input and invite interested stakeholders to contact us.

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