

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter provides a description of those portions of the environment that would be affected by the proposed Keystone XL Project (proposed Project) and its connected actions from the border crossing near Morgan, Montana, to Steele City, Nebraska. The states that would be affected are Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Kansas.

The information provided in this chapter is used in the assessment of impacts from the proposed Project as described in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences. The level of detail in the description of each resource in this chapter corresponds to the magnitude of the direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts of the proposed Project. Discussions of the affected environment and impacts from alternatives to the proposed Project are in Chapter 5, Alternatives.

As noted in Section 1.7, Environmental Review of the Canadian Portion of the Keystone XL Project, and Section 5.1, No Action Alternatives, the U.S. Department of State (the Department) reviewed the analysis of the portion of the proposed pipeline in Canada conducted by the National Energy Board of Canada. In so doing, the Department was guided by Executive Order 12114 (Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions). Consistent with Executive Order 12114, the Department did not conduct an in-depth assessment of the potential impacts of the Canadian portion of the proposed pipeline or include a description of the affected environment in Canada. However, as a matter of policy, in addition to its environmental analysis of the proposed Project in the United States, the Department has included information regarding potential impacts in Canada in Section 4.15.4, Extraterritorial Concerns. Information related to impacts from the proposed Project and its alternatives associated with development of the oil sands is included in Section 1.4, Market Analysis, and Section 4.15.4.2, Concerns Related to Oil Sand Extraction.

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