President Obama has vetoed a bill that would approve the Keystone Pipeline expansion, a project causing fierce debate between Republican lawmakers and environmentalists.

The bill would have given the green light to a plan extending the Keystone Pipeline to transport tar sands oil from Canada to the Gulf Coast. The proposal requires government approval.

The legislation failed to adequately consider how expanding the pipeline could affect the “national interest,” Obama wrote in his veto.

Environmental groups say that building the extension and producing the oil are bad for the environment, but proponents say the pipeline would provide a reliable source for oil, decreasing the cost of oil for U.S. consumers.

The debate over the pipeline is the wrong conversation to prioritize, Jeremy Symons, senior director for climate policy at the Environmental Defense Fund, said.

“We should be focusing instead on the real energy issues in front of the country, which is how we move forward with a clean energy future for America,” he said.

But blocking the project will not help the future of clean energy; it will force the oil to come in through other pathways, according to Robert Bryce, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. “The idea that blocking this pipeline is going to prevent oil from getting to market is simply false,” he said.

This veto is Obama’s first in five years and only the third of his presidency. To override the veto, a two-thirds majority in the House and Senate would have to vote against Obama, but Republicans lack the necessary votes, according to Reuters.