

Montana governor expresses Kearsarge concerns

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The governor of Montana is challenging Imperial Oil to build mega components for the Kearsarge oil sands project in his state.

In a face-to-face meeting with senior executives from Imperial's parent company, Exxon-Mobil, Governor Brian Schweitzer said much of the opposition to trucking the mega-loads through Montana stems from the fact they are made in Korea.

"We have 7.3% unemployment and some Montanans are going to say, 'well what's in it for us?'" Schweitzer is quoting as telling the oilmen in a story that appeared in the Great Falls Tribune.

"I would encourage you to consider manufacturing in Montana."

The governor also said he wasn't afraid to keep big oil waiting.

"Whatever permits you get or don't get, it will be based on the rule of law, not because we either love or fear ExxonMobil," he said.

Jeff Woodbury, the executive vice-president of Exxon-Mobil, is hoping to have the modules in place before winter. But, that probably won't happen because lawsuits in Montana and Idaho are blocking permits for the big loads. (*Great Falls Tribune, em, bp*)