

TC PIPELINES LP
Form S-3ASR
April 22, 2010

[QuickLinks](#) -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 22, 2010

Registration No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

TC PipeLines, LP

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Delaware

(State or Other Jurisdiction of Incorporation or Organization)

52-2135448

(I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

717 Texas Street, Suite #2400, Houston, Texas 77002

(877) 290-2772

(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Registrant's Principal Executive Offices)

Mark Zimmerman

TC PipeLines, LP

717 Texas Street, Suite #2400, Houston, Texas 77002

(877) 290-2772

(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Agent for Service)

Please send copies of all communications to:

Alan Talkington

Brett Cooper

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

The Orrick Building, 405 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

(415) 773-5700

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement.

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box:

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box:

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company
(Do Not Check if Smaller Reporting Company)

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered and Sold by the Registrant | Amount to be Registered / Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Unit / Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1) | Amount of Registration Fee(2) |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Common Units representing limited partner interests | | |
| Debt Securities | | |
| Total | | \$0 |

(1) An indeterminate aggregate initial offering price or number of the securities of each identified class is being registered as may from time to time be issued at indeterminate prices. Separate consideration may or may not be received for securities that are issuable on exercise, conversion or exchange of other securities.

(2) In accordance with Rule 456(b) and Rule 457(r) under the Securities Act, the registrant is deferring payment of all of the registration fee.

PROSPECTUS

TC PipeLines, LP

Common Units Debt Securities

We may in one or more offerings offer and sell common units representing limited partner interests of TC PipeLines, LP and debt securities. We will offer the securities in amounts, at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of our offerings. This prospectus describes the general terms of these securities. The specific terms of any securities and the specific manner in which we will offer them will be included in a supplement to this prospectus relating to that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus.

You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplements carefully before you invest in any of our securities. This prospectus may not be used to consummate sales of our securities unless it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

Our common units are quoted for trading on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "TCLP."

Investing in our common units and debt securities involves risks. Limited partnerships are inherently different from corporations. See "Risk Factors" beginning on page 6 to read about important risks that you should consider before buying our securities.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is April 22, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| About This Prospectus | 1 |
| Where You Can Find More Information | 2 |
| Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements | 3 |
| About TC PipeLines, LP | 5 |
| Risk Factors | 6 |
| Use of Proceeds | 6 |
| Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges | 6 |
| Description of Common Units | 7 |
| Description of Debt Securities | 8 |
| Material Tax Considerations | 20 |
| Investment in TC PipeLines, LP by Employee Benefit Plans | 35 |
| Plan of Distribution | 37 |
| Legal Matters | 38 |
| Experts | 38 |

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and in any applicable prospectus supplement. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. Neither we nor any underwriter, dealer or agent will make an offer to sell the securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information in this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement is accurate only as of the dates on their covers. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, using a "shelf" registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may sell an indeterminate amount of the common units or debt securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings.

This prospectus provides you with only a general description of us and the common units and debt securities that we may offer. This prospectus does not contain all of the information set forth in the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, as permitted by the rules and regulations of the SEC. For additional information regarding us and the offered securities, please refer to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. Each time we sell common units or debt securities with this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that contains specific information about the offering and the terms of the offered securities. The prospectus supplement also may add, delete, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should rely only on the information in the applicable prospectus supplement if this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement are inconsistent. Before purchasing any securities, you should carefully read both this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, together with the additional information described under the section of this prospectus titled "Where You Can Find More Information." In particular, you should carefully consider the risks and uncertainties described under the section titled "Risk Factors" or otherwise included in any applicable prospectus supplement or incorporated by reference in this prospectus before you decide whether to purchase the securities. These risks and uncertainties, together with those not known to us or those that we may deem immaterial, could impair our business and ultimately affect our ability to make payments on the securities.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We have filed a registration statement on Form S-3 with the SEC under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), that registers the securities offered by this prospectus. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits, contains additional relevant information about us. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit some information included in the registration statement from this prospectus.

In addition, we file annual, quarterly and other reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on their public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available at the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>. We also make available free of charge on our website, at <http://www.tcpipelineslp.com>, all materials that we file electronically with the SEC, including our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, Section 16 reports and amendments to these reports, as soon as reasonably practicable after such materials are electronically filed with, or furnished to, the SEC.

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" the information we have filed with the SEC. This means that we can disclose important information to you without actually including the specific information in this prospectus by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and may replace information in this prospectus and information previously filed with the SEC.

We incorporate by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below and any future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), until the applicable offering under this prospectus and any prospectus supplement is terminated, in each case other than information furnished to the SEC under Item 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K and that is not deemed filed under the Exchange Act and is not incorporated in this prospectus.

Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009;

Our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 20, 2010, February 4, 2010, March 5, 2010, and April 16, 2010; and

The description of our common units contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A/A, filed on November 12, 2009.

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this document through us or from the SEC through the SEC's website at the address provided above. Documents incorporated by reference are available from us without charge, excluding any exhibits to those documents unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference in this document, by requesting them in writing or by telephone from us at the following address:

TC PipeLines, LP
717 Texas Street, Suite 2400
Houston, Texas 77002-2761
Toll Free: (877) 290-2772

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

The statements in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and the documents we have incorporated by reference that are not historical information, including statements concerning plans and objectives of management for future operations, economic performance or related assumptions, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Exchange Act. Forward-looking statements may include words such as "anticipate," "estimate," "expect," "project," "intend," "plan," "believe," "forecast" and other words and terms of similar meaning. The absence of these words, however, does not mean that the statements are not forward-looking.

These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events, based on what we believe are reasonable assumptions. Certain factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those contemplated in the forward-looking statements include:

the ability of Great Lakes Gas Transmission Limited Partnership ("Great Lakes") and Northern Border Pipeline Company ("Northern Border") to continue to make distributions at their current levels;

the impact of unsold capacity on Great Lakes and Northern Border being greater or less than expected;

competitive conditions in our industry and the ability of Great Lakes, Northern Border, North Baja Pipeline, LLC ("North Baja") and Tuscarora Gas Transmission Company ("Tuscarora" and collectively, "our pipeline systems") to market pipeline capacity on favorable terms, which is affected by:

future demand for and prices of natural gas;

level of natural gas basis differentials;

competitive conditions in the overall natural gas and electricity markets;

availability and relative cost of supplies of Canadian and United States ("U.S.") natural gas, including the recently discovered shale gas resources such as the Horn River and Montney deposits in Western Canada, along with U.S. Rockies, Mid-Continent and Marcellus gas developments;

competitive developments by U.S. and Canadian natural gas transmission companies;

the availability of additional storage capacity and current storage levels;

the level of liquefied natural gas imports;

weather conditions that impact supply and demand; and

the ability of shippers to meet credit worthiness requirements;

the impact of current and future laws, rulings and governmental regulations, particularly Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the "FERC") regulations and rate proceedings, and proposed and pending legislation by Congress and proposed and pending regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on us and our pipeline systems;

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

changes in relative cost structures of natural gas producing basins, such as changes in Alberta royalty programs, that may influence, positively or negatively, the development of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin;

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

decisions by other pipeline companies to advance projects that affect our pipeline systems' competitive environment and the regulatory, financing and construction risks related to construction of interstate natural gas pipelines and additional facilities;

the ability of our pipeline systems to identify and/or consummate expansion projects that are accretive growth opportunities for the Partnership;

performance of contractual obligations by customers of our pipeline systems;

the imposition of entity level taxation by states on partnerships;

operating hazards, natural disasters, weather-related delays, casualty losses and other matters beyond our control;

the Partnership's ability to identify and/or consummate accretive growth opportunities from TransCanada Corporation or others;

our ability to control operating costs and the ability of TransCanada Corporation to implement its reorganization of U.S. pipeline operations, including the operations of our pipeline systems, and realize cost savings; and

general economic conditions in North America, which impact:

the debt and equity capital markets and our ability to access these markets at reasonable costs;

the overall demand for natural gas by end users; and

natural gas prices.

Other factors described elsewhere in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and the documents we have incorporated by reference, or factors that are unknown or unpredictable, could also have material adverse effects on future results. Please also read "Risk Factors" in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement and "Risk Factors" and "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations" in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and other SEC filings. All forward-looking statements attributable to us or persons acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by these factors. These forward-looking statements and information are made only as of the date of this prospectus or the filing of the report in which they were included, and except as required by applicable law, we undertake no obligation to update these forward-looking statements and information to reflect new information, subsequent events or otherwise.

ABOUT TC PIPELINES, LP

We are a publicly traded Delaware limited partnership formed in 1998 by TransCanada PipeLines Limited to acquire, own and participate in the management of energy infrastructure businesses in North America. Our strategic focus is on delivering stable, sustainable cash distributions to our unitholders and finding opportunities to increase cash distributions while maintaining a low risk profile.

TC PipeLines, LP ("TC PipeLines") and its subsidiaries are collectively referred to herein as "the Partnership." In this report, references to "we," "us" or "our" refer to the Partnership. TransCanada PipeLines Limited is a wholly-owned subsidiary of TransCanada Corporation (which, together with its subsidiaries, is referred to as "TransCanada").

The general partner of the Partnership is TC PipeLines GP, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of TransCanada.

To date, our investments have been in interstate natural gas pipeline systems that transport natural gas to a variety of markets in the United States, Eastern Canada and Mexico.

We own a 46.45 per cent general partner interest in Great Lakes. The remaining 53.55 per cent interest in Great Lakes is held by TransCanada.

We own a 50 per cent general partner interest in Northern Border. The other 50 per cent interest is held by ONEOK Partners, L.P., a publicly traded limited partnership that is controlled by ONEOK, Inc.

We own 100 per cent of North Baja, which we acquired on July 1, 2009 from TransCanada.

We own 100 per cent of Tuscarora.

TransCanada operates our pipeline systems.

We believe our strong financial position, including available unused capacity on our credit facility, gives us the capacity to pursue opportunities to grow in a sustained and disciplined manner for the long-term benefit of our unitholders.

Our common units are traded on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "TCLP."

As of April 22, 2010, we had 46,227,766 common units outstanding, of which 29,142,935 were held by the public, 11,287,725 were held by TransCan Northern Ltd. and 5,797,106 were held by the general partner, both of which are indirect wholly-owned subsidiaries of TransCanada. TransCanada, through its indirect ownership of our general partner, holds a two percent general partner interest in the Partnership. In addition to the distributions received as a common unitholder, the general partner also is entitled to receive incentive distributions if quarterly cash distributions on the common units exceed levels specified in our partnership agreement.

RISK FACTORS

Limited partner interests are inherently different from the capital stock of a corporation. An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider all of the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and other information that may be incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement as provided under "Where You Can Find More Information," including those in Item 1A. "Risk Factors" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009. This prospectus also contains forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Please read "Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements." Our actual results could differ materially from those anticipated in the forward-looking statements as a result of certain factors, including the risks described elsewhere in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. If any of these risks occur, our business, financial condition or results of operation could be adversely affected. In that case, the trading price of our common units or debt securities could decline and you could lose all or part of your investment.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will use the net proceeds we receive from the sale of securities for general partnership purposes, which may include repayment of debt, capital expenditures, future acquisitions and working capital.

Any specific allocation of the net proceeds of an offering of securities to a specific purpose will be determined at the time of the offering and will be described in a prospectus supplement.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated is as follows:

| Year Ended December 31,(1) | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
| 8.55x | 3.13x | 3.26x | 4.37x | 4.55x |

For purposes of calculating the ratio of earnings to fixed charges:

"earnings" represents the aggregate of income from continuing operations before undistributed income from equity investees and fixed charges; and

"fixed charges" represents interest expense.

(1) The acquisition of North Baja in 2009 was accounted for as a transaction between entities under common control similar to a pooling of interests, and the Partnership's historical financial information was recast to include North Baja for all periods presented. The ratios presented reflect the recast historical financial information.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON UNITS

Number of Units

As of April 22, 2010, we had 46,227,766 common units outstanding, of which 29,142,935 were held by the public, 11,287,725 were held by TransCan Northern Ltd. and 5,797,106 were held by the general partner, both of which are indirect wholly-owned subsidiaries of TransCanada. TransCanada, through its indirect ownership of the Partnership's general partner, holds a two percent general partner interest in the Partnership.

The common units represent an aggregate 98% limited partner interest and the general partner interest represents an aggregate 2% general partner interest in the Partnership.

Under our partnership agreement, we may issue, without further unitholder action, an unlimited number of additional limited partner interests and other equity securities with such rights, preferences and privileges as may be established by the general partner in its sole discretion.

Distributions

We will make quarterly cash distributions to our partners comprising all of our Available Cash. Available Cash is defined in the partnership agreement and generally means, with respect to any quarter of the Partnership, all cash on hand at the end of such quarter less the amount of cash reserves that is necessary or appropriate in the reasonable discretion of the general partner to:

provide for the proper conduct of our business (including reserves for future capital expenditures and for anticipated credit needs);

comply with applicable laws or any of our debt instruments or agreements; or

provide funds for cash distributions to unitholders and the general partner in respect of any one or more of the next four quarters.

We distribute Available Cash from our operations in the following manner:

First, 98% to all units, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until each unitholder has received the first target distribution of \$0.81 per common unit for that quarter;

Second, 85% to all units, pro rata, and 15% to the general partner, until each unitholder has received the second target distribution of \$0.88 for that quarter; and

Thereafter, 75% to all units, pro rata, and 25% to the general partner.

Voting

Each holder of common units is entitled to one vote for each common unit on all matters submitted to a vote of the unitholders; provided that, if at any time any person or group (other than TransCanada and its affiliates) owns beneficially 20% or more of all common units, such common units so owned may not be voted on any matter and may not be considered to be outstanding when sending notices of a meeting of unitholders (unless otherwise required by law), calculating required votes, determining the presence of a quorum or for other similar purposes under our partnership agreement.

Listing

Our outstanding common units are listed on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "TCLP." Any additional common units we issue will also be listed on NASDAQ.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Our transfer agent and registrar for the common units is BNY Mellon Shareowner Services.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description sets forth the general terms and provisions that could apply to the debt securities. Each prospectus supplement will state the particular terms that actually will apply to the debt securities included in the supplement.

The debt securities will be:

our direct general obligations;

either senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities; and

issued under separate indentures among us and the trustee (the "Trustee").

We do not have any debt securities outstanding at this time. In addition to the following summary, you should refer to the applicable provisions of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture for more detailed information. We have filed forms of each of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The final indentures and the applicable supplemental indentures will be filed as exhibits to a Current Report on Form 8-K in connection with a particular offering.

Neither indenture limits the aggregate principal amount of debt securities that we may issue under that indenture. The debt securities may be issued in one or more series as we may authorize at various times. All debt securities will be unsecured. The senior securities will have the same rank as all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated securities will be subordinated to senior indebtedness as described under "Provisions Only in the Subordinated Indenture Subordinated Debt Securities Subordinated to Senior Debt" below.

Specific Terms of Each Series of Debt Securities in the Prospectus Supplement

A prospectus supplement and a supplemental indenture or authorizing resolutions relating to any series of debt securities being offered will include specific terms relating to such debt securities. These terms will include some or all of the following:

the form and title of the debt securities;

the total principal amount of the debt securities;

the currency or currencies in which principal and interest will be paid;

the prices at which we will issue the debt securities;

the portion of the principal amount that will be payable if the maturity of the debt securities is accelerated;

any right we may have to defer payments of interest by extending the dates payments are due and whether interest on those deferred amounts will be payable as well;

the dates on which the principal of the debt securities will be payable;

the interest rate that the debt securities will bear and the interest payment dates for the debt securities;

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

any conversion or exchange provisions;

any optional redemption provisions;

any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate us to repurchase or otherwise redeem the debt securities;

any Events of Default (as defined below) or covenants; and

any other terms of the debt securities.

Provisions Only in the Senior Indenture

The senior debt securities will rank equally in right of payment with all of our other senior and unsubordinated debt and senior in right of payment to any of our subordinated debt (including the subordinated debt securities). The senior indenture may contain restrictive covenants, including provisions that:

limit our ability to create liens on any of our property or assets; and

limit our ability to sell and lease back our principal assets.

The subordinated indenture may not contain any similar provisions. We have described below these provisions and some of the defined terms used in them.

Limitation on Liens

The senior indenture may provide that we will not, nor will we permit any subsidiary to, create, assume, incur or suffer to exist any lien upon any property or assets, whether owned or leased on the date of the senior indenture or thereafter acquired, to secure any debt of TC PipeLines or any other person (other than the senior debt securities issued thereunder), without in any such case making effective provision whereby all of the senior debt securities outstanding thereunder shall be secured equally and ratably with, or prior to, such debt so long as such debt shall be so secured.

This restriction does not apply to:

- (1) Permitted Liens (as defined below);
- (2) any lien which secures Non-Recourse Debt (as defined below) of TC PipeLines or any subsidiary;
- (3) any lien upon any property or assets of TC PipeLines or any subsidiary in existence on the date the senior debt securities of such series are first issued or created pursuant to an "after-acquired property" clause or similar term or arising thereafter pursuant to contractual commitments entered into prior to and existing on such date;
- (4) any lien upon any property or assets created at the time of acquisition of such property or assets by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary or within one year after such time to secure all or a portion of the purchase price for such property or assets or debt incurred to finance such purchase price, whether such debt was incurred prior to, at the time of or within one year after the date of such acquisition;
- (5) any lien upon any property or assets existing thereon at the time of the acquisition thereof by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary; *provided, however*, that such lien only encumbers the property or assets so acquired;
- (6) any lien upon any property or assets of a person existing thereon at the time such person becomes a subsidiary by acquisition, merger or otherwise; *provided, however*, that such lien only encumbers the property or assets of such person at the time such person becomes a subsidiary;
- (7) any lien upon any property or assets to secure all or part of the cost of construction, development, repair or improvements thereon or to secure debt incurred prior to, at the time of, or within one year after completion of such construction, development, repair or improvements or the commencement of full operations thereof (whichever is later), or to provide funds for any such purpose;
- (8) liens imposed by law or order as a result of any proceeding before any court or regulatory body that is being contested in good faith, and liens which secure a judgment or other court-

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

ordered award or settlement as to which TC PipeLines or the applicable subsidiary has not exhausted its appellate rights;

- (9) any lien upon any additions, improvements, replacements, repairs, fixtures, appurtenances or component parts thereof attaching to or required to be attached to property or assets pursuant to the terms of any mortgage, pledge agreement, security agreement or other similar instrument, creating a lien upon such property or assets permitted by clauses (1) through (8) above; or
- (10) any extension, renewal, refinancing, refunding or replacement (or successive extensions, renewals, refinancing, refundings or replacements) of any lien, in whole or in part, referred to in clauses (1) through (9) above, or of any debt secured thereby; *provided, however*, that the principal amount of debt secured thereby shall not exceed the greater of the principal amount of debt so secured at the time of such extension, renewal, refinancing, refunding or replacement and the original principal amount of debt so secured (plus in each case the aggregate amount of premiums, other payments, costs and expenses required to be paid or incurred in connection with such extension, renewal, refinancing, refunding or replacement); *provided further, however*, that such extension, renewal, refinancing, refunding or replacement shall be limited to all or a part of the property (including improvements, alterations and repairs on such property) subject to the encumbrance so extended, renewed, refinanced, refunded or replaced (plus improvements, alterations and repairs on such property);
- (11) any lien resulting from the deposit of moneys or evidence of indebtedness in trust for the purpose of defeasing debt of TC PipeLines or any subsidiary; or
- (12) any lien on current assets securing any debt to any bank or banks or other lending institution or institutions incurred in the ordinary course of business and for the purpose of carrying on the same, repayable or maturing within 18 months of the date when such debt is incurred or the date of any renewal or extension thereof.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, under the senior indenture, we may, and may permit any subsidiary to, create, assume, incur, or suffer to exist any lien upon any property or assets to secure debt of TC PipeLines or any person (other than the senior debt securities) that is not excepted by clauses (1) through (12), inclusive, above without securing the senior debt securities issued under the senior indenture, *provided* that the aggregate principal amount of all debt then outstanding secured by such lien and all similar liens, together with all net sale proceeds from Sale-Leaseback Transactions (as defined below) (excluding Sale-Leaseback Transactions permitted by clauses (1) through (4), inclusive, of the first paragraph of the Restriction on Sale-Leasebacks covenant described below) does not exceed 15% of Consolidated Net Tangible Assets (as defined below).

"*Non-Recourse Debt*" means:

any debt (other than endorsements for collection in the ordinary course of business) in respect of obligations of another person incurred or assumed to finance or refinance the creation, development, construction or acquisition of assets, and

any increases in or extensions, renewals or refunding of any such debt,

provided that the recourse of the lender thereof or any agent, trustee, receiver or other person acting on behalf of the lender in respect of such debt or any judgment in respect thereof is limited in all circumstances (other than in respect of false or misleading representations or warranties and customary indemnities provided with respect to such financings) to the assets created, developed, constructed or acquired with respect to which such debt has been incurred or assumed and to any receivables, inventory, equipment, chattel paper, intangibles and other rights or collateral arising from or connected with the assets created, developed, constructed or acquired (and, for certainty, shall include the shares

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

or other ownership interests of a single purpose entity (or any parent thereof) which holds only such assets and other rights and collateral arising from or connected therewith) and to which the lender has recourse.

"*Permitted Liens*" means:

liens upon rights-of-way for pipeline purposes;

any statutory or governmental lien or lien arising by operation of law, or any mechanics', repairmen's, materialmen's, suppliers', carriers', landlords', warehousemen's or similar lien incurred in the ordinary course of business which is not yet due or which is being contested in good faith by appropriate proceedings and any undetermined lien which is incidental to construction, development, improvement or repair;

the right reserved to, or vested in, any municipality or public authority by the terms of any right, power, franchise, grant, license, permit or by any provision of law, to purchase or recapture, or to designate a purchaser of, any property;

liens of taxes and assessments which are (A) for the then current year, (B) not at the time delinquent, or (C) delinquent but the validity of which is being contested in good faith at the time by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary;

liens of, or to secure performance of, leases;

any lien upon, or deposits of, any assets in favor of any surety company or clerk of court for the purpose of obtaining indemnity or stay of judicial proceedings;

any lien upon property or assets acquired or sold by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary resulting from the exercise of any rights arising out of defaults on receivables;

any lien incurred in the ordinary course of business in connection with worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, temporary disability, social security, retiree health or similar laws or regulations or to secure obligations imposed by statute or governmental regulations;

any lien in favor of TC PipeLines or any subsidiary;

any lien in favor of the United States of America or any state thereof, or any department, agency or instrumentality or political subdivision of the United States of America or any state thereof, to secure partial, progress, advance, or other payments pursuant to any contract or statute, or any debt incurred by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary for the purpose of financing all or any part of the purchase price of, or the cost of constructing, developing, repairing or improving, the property or assets subject to such lien;

any lien securing industrial development, pollution control or similar revenue bonds;

any lien securing debt of TC PipeLines or any subsidiary, all or a portion of the net proceeds of which are used, substantially concurrent with the funding thereof (and for purposes of determining such "substantial concurrence," taking into consideration, among other things, required notices to be given to holders of outstanding securities under the indenture (including the debt securities) in connection with such refunding, refinancing or repurchase, and the required corresponding durations thereof), to refinance, refund or repurchase all outstanding securities under the senior indenture (including the debt

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

securities), including the amount of all accrued interest thereon and reasonable fees and expenses and premium, if any, incurred by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary in connection therewith;

liens in favor of any person to secure obligations under the provisions of any letters of credit, bank guarantees, bonds or surety obligations required or requested by any governmental authority in connection with any contract or statute; or

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

any lien upon or deposits of any assets to secure performance of bids, trade contracts, leases or statutory obligations.

"*Consolidated Net Tangible Assets*" means, at any date of determination, the total amount of assets after deducting therefrom:

all current liabilities (excluding (A) any current liabilities that by their terms are extendable or renewable at the option of the obligor thereon to a time more than 12 months after the time as of which the amount thereof is being computed, and (B) current maturities of long-term debt), and

the value (net of any applicable reserves) of all goodwill, trade names, trademarks, patents, unamortized debt discount and expense and other like intangible assets, all as set forth on the consolidated balance sheet of TC PipeLines and its consolidated subsidiaries for TC PipeLines' most recently completed fiscal quarter, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Restrictions on Sale-Leasebacks

The senior indenture may provide that we will not, and will not permit any subsidiary to, engage in the sale or transfer by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary of any property or assets to a person (other than TC PipeLines or a subsidiary) and the taking back by TC PipeLines or any subsidiary, as the case may be, of a lease of such property or assets (a "Sale-Leaseback Transaction"), unless:

- (1) such Sale-Leaseback Transaction occurs within one year from the date of completion of the acquisition of the property or assets subject thereto or the date of the completion of construction, development or substantial repair or improvement, or commencement of full operations on such property or assets, whichever is later;
- (2) the Sale-Leaseback Transaction involves a lease for a period, including renewals, of not more than three years;
- (3) TC PipeLines or such subsidiary would be entitled to incur debt secured by a lien on the property or assets subject thereto in a principal amount equal to or exceeding the net sale proceeds from such Sale-Leaseback Transaction without equally and ratably securing the Securities; or
- (4) TC PipeLines or such subsidiary, within a one-year period after such Sale-Leaseback Transaction, applies or causes to be applied an amount not less than the net sale proceeds from such Sale-Leaseback Transaction to (A) the prepayment, repayment, redemption, reduction or retirement of *Pari Passu* Debt of the Partnership, or (B) the expenditure or expenditures for property or assets used or to be used in the ordinary course of business of the Partnership or its subsidiaries.

"*Pari Passu Debt*" means any debt of TC PipeLines, whether outstanding on the date any securities are issued under the senior indenture or thereafter created, incurred or assumed, unless in the case of any particular debt, the instrument creating or evidencing the same or pursuant to which the same is outstanding expressly provides that such debt shall be subordinated in right of payment to the securities.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, TC PipeLines may, and may permit any of its subsidiaries to, effect any Sale-Leaseback Transaction that is not excepted by clauses (1) through (4) above; provided that the net sale proceeds from such Sale-Leaseback Transaction, together with the aggregate principal amount of then outstanding debt (other than the senior debt securities) secured by liens upon any property or assets of TC PipeLines or its subsidiaries not excepted by clauses (1) through (12) of the second

paragraph of the limitation on liens covenant described above, do not exceed 15% of the Consolidated Net Tangible Assets.

Provisions Only in the Subordinated Indenture

Subordinated Debt Securities Subordinated to Senior Debt

The subordinated debt securities will rank junior in right of payment to all of our Senior Debt. "Senior Debt" is defined to include all notes or other evidences of indebtedness, including our guarantees for money we borrowed, not expressed to be subordinate or junior in right of payment to any other of our indebtedness.

Payment Blockages

The subordinated indenture may provide that no payment of principal, interest or any premium on the subordinated debt securities may be made in the event that we fail to pay when due any amounts on any Senior Debt and in other instances specified in the indenture.

No Limitation on Amount of Senior Debt

The subordinated indenture will not limit the amount of Senior Debt that we may incur.

Consolidation, Merger or Asset Sale

We may not consolidate with or merge into any other entity or sell, lease or transfer our properties and assets as, or substantially as, an entirety to, any entity, unless:

(a) in the case of a merger, TC PipeLines is the surviving entity, or (b) the entity formed by such consolidation or into which TC PipeLines is merged or the entity that acquires by sale or transfer, or that leases, the properties and assets of TC PipeLines as, or substantially as, an entity expressly assumes the due and punctual payment of the principal of and any premium and interest on all the debt securities under the indentures and the performance or observance of every covenant of the indentures on the part of TC PipeLines to be performed or observed and shall have expressly provided for conversion rights in respect of any series of outstanding securities with conversion rights;

the surviving entity or successor entity is an entity organized and existing under the laws of the United States of America, any State thereof or the District of Columbia;

immediately after giving effect to such transaction, no default or Event of Default shall have occurred and be continuing; and

TC PipeLines has delivered to the Trustee an Officers' Certificate and an Opinion of Counsel, each stating that such consolidation, merger, conveyance, sale, transfer or lease and such supplemental indenture required, if any, comply with the indentures and that all conditions precedent herein provided for relating to such transaction have been complied with.

Modification of Indentures

We may modify or amend each indenture if the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of all series issued under the indenture affected by the modification or amendment consent to it. Without the consent of each outstanding debt security affected, however, no modification may:

change the stated maturity of the principal of or any installment of principal of or interest on any debt security;

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

reduce the principal amount of, the interest rate on or the premium payable upon redemption of any debt security;

reduce the principal amount of an original discount debt security payable upon acceleration of maturity;

change the place of payment where any debt security or any premium or interest on any debt security is payable;

change the coin or currency in which any debt security or any premium or interest on any debt security is payable;

impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on any debt security;

reduce the percentage in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series necessary to modify the indenture, to waive compliance with certain provisions of the indenture or to waive certain defaults; or

modify any of the above provisions.

We may modify or amend the indenture without the consent of any holders of the debt securities in certain circumstances or for certain purposes, including:

to secure the senior debt securities as described above under "Provisions Only in the Senior Indenture Limitations on Liens";

to provide for the assumption of our obligations under the indenture and the debt securities by a successor upon any merger, consolidation or asset transfer;

to add covenants and events of default or to surrender any rights we have under the indenture;

to make any change that does not adversely affect any outstanding debt securities of a series in any material respect;

to supplement the indenture in order to establish a new series under the indenture;

to cure any ambiguity, omission, defect or inconsistency;

to provide for successor trustees;

to qualify the indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended;

to provide for uncertificated securities in addition to certificated securities;

to supplement any provision of the indenture necessary to permit or facilitate the defeasance and discharge of any series of Securities so long as that action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any outstanding securities; and

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

to comply with the rules or regulations of any securities exchange or automated quotation system on which any of the securities may be listed or traded.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive past defaults under the indenture and compliance by us with our covenants with respect to the debt securities of that series only. Those holders may not, however, waive any default in any payment on any debt security of that series or compliance with a provision that cannot be modified or amended without the consent of each holder affected.

Events of Default and Remedies

"Event of Default" when used in an indenture, may mean any of the following:

failure to pay the principal of or any premium on any debt security when due;

failure to pay interest on any debt security for 60 days;

failure to perform any other covenant or warranty in the indenture that continues for 90 days after being given written notice;

certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of TC PipeLines; or

any other Event of Default included in any indenture or supplemental indenture.

The subordination does not affect our obligation, which is absolute and unconditional, to pay, when due, the principal of and any premium and interest on the subordinated debt securities. In addition, the subordination does not prevent the occurrence of any default under the subordinated indenture.

An Event of Default for a particular series of debt securities does not necessarily constitute an Event of Default for any other series of debt securities issued under an indenture. The Trustee may withhold notice to the holders of debt securities of any default (except in the payment of principal or interest) if it considers such withholding of notice to be in the best interests of the holders.

If an Event of Default for any series of debt securities occurs and continues, the Trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of the series may declare the entire principal of all the debt securities of that series to be due and payable immediately. If this happens, subject to certain conditions, the holders of a majority of the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of that series can void the declaration.

Other than its duties in case of a default, a Trustee is not obligated to exercise any of its rights or powers under any indenture at the request, order or direction of any holders, unless the holders offer the Trustee reasonable indemnity. If they provide this reasonable indemnification, the holders of a majority in principal amount of any series of debt securities may direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding or any remedy available to the Trustee, or exercising any power conferred upon the Trustee, for any series of debt securities.

Registration of Notes

We may issue debt securities of a series in registered, bearer, coupon or global form.

Minimum Denominations

Unless the prospectus supplement for each issuance of debt securities states otherwise the securities will be issued in registered form in amounts of \$1,000 each or multiples of \$1,000.

No Personal Liability of General Partner

Unless otherwise stated in a prospectus supplement and supplemental indenture relating to a series of debt securities being offered, the general partner and its directors, officers, employees and shareholders will not have any liability for our obligations under the indentures or the debt securities. Each holder of debt securities by accepting a debt security waives and releases all such liability. The waiver and release are part of the consideration for the issuance of the debt securities.

Payment and Transfer

Principal, interest and any premium on fully registered securities will be paid at designated places. Payment will be made by check mailed to the persons in whose names the debt securities are registered on days specified in the indentures or any prospectus supplement. Debt securities payments in other forms will be paid at a place designated by us and specified in a prospectus supplement.

Fully registered securities may be transferred or exchanged at the corporate trust office of the Trustee or at any other office or agency maintained by us for such purposes, without the payment of any service charge except for any tax or governmental charge.

Form, Exchange, Registration and Transfer

Debt securities of any series may be exchangeable for other debt securities of the same series, the same total principal amount and the same terms but in different authorized denominations in accordance with the indenture. Holders may present debt securities for registration of transfer at the office of the security registrar or any transfer agent we designate. The security registrar or transfer agent will effect the transfer or exchange when it is satisfied with the documents of title and identity of the person making the request. We will not charge a service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange of the debt securities. We may, however, require the payment of any tax or other governmental charge payable for that registration.

We will appoint the trustee under each indenture as security registrar for the debt securities issued under that indenture. We are required to maintain an office or agency for transfers and exchanges in each place of payment. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents for any series of debt securities. In the case of any redemption in part, we will not be required:

to issue, register the transfer of or exchange debt securities of a series either during a period beginning 15 business days prior to the selection of debt securities of that series for redemption and ending on the close of business on the day of mailing of the relevant notice of redemption; or

to register the transfer of or exchange any debt security, or portion of any debt security, called for redemption, except the unredeemed portion of any debt security we are redeeming in part.

Discharging Our Obligations

We may choose to either discharge our obligations on the debt securities of any series in a legal defeasance, or to release ourselves from our covenant restrictions on the debt securities of any series in a covenant defeasance. We may do so at any time on the 91st day after we deposit with the Trustee sufficient cash or government securities to pay the principal, interest, any premium and any other sums due to the stated maturity date or a redemption date of the debt securities of the series. If we choose the legal defeasance option, the holders of the debt securities of the series will not be entitled to the benefits of the indenture except for registration of transfer and exchange of debt securities, replacement of lost, stolen or mutilated debt securities, conversion or exchange of debt securities, sinking fund payments and receipt of principal and interest on the original stated due dates or specified redemption dates. We may discharge our obligations under the indentures or release ourselves from covenant restrictions only if we meet certain requirements. Among other things, we must deliver an opinion of our legal counsel that the discharge will not result in holders of debt securities having to recognize taxable income or loss or subject then to different tax treatment. In the case of legal defeasance, this opinion must be based on either an IRS letter ruling or change in federal tax law. We may not have a default on the debt securities discharged on the date of deposit. The discharge may not violate any of our agreements. The discharge may not result in our becoming an investment company in violation of the Investment Company Act of 1940.

Book Entry, Delivery and Form

The debt securities of a series may be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global certificates that will be deposited with a depository identified in a prospectus supplement.

Unless otherwise stated in any prospectus supplement, the Depository Trust Company ("DTC"), New York, NY, will act as securities depository for the debt securities. The debt securities will be issued as fully-registered securities registered in the name of Cede & Co. (DTC's partnership nominee) or such other name as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. One fully-registered securities certificate will be issued for the debt securities, in the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities, and will be deposited with DTC. If, however, the aggregate principal amount of any issue exceeds \$500 million, one certificate will be issued with respect to each \$500 million of principal amount, and an additional certificate will be issued with respect to any remaining principal amount of such issue.

DTC, the world's largest securities depository, is a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law, a "banking organization" within the meaning of the New York Banking Law, a member of the Federal Reserve System, a "clearing corporation" within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, and a "clearing agency" registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. DTC holds and provides asset servicing for over 3.5 million issues of U.S. and non-U.S. equity issues, corporate and municipal debt issues, and money market instruments (from over 100 countries) that DTC's participants ("Direct Participants") deposit with DTC. DTC also facilitates the post-trade settlement among Direct Participants of sales and other securities transactions in deposited securities, through electronic computerized book-entry transfers and pledges between Direct Participants' accounts. This eliminates the need for physical movement of securities certificates. Direct Participants include both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations, and certain other organizations. DTC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation ("DTCC"). DTCC is the holding company for DTC, National Securities Clearing Corporation and Fixed Income Clearing Corporation, all of which are registered clearing agencies. DTCC is owned by the users of its regulated subsidiaries. Access to the DTC system is also available to others such as both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, and clearing corporations that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a Direct Participant, either directly or indirectly ("Indirect Participants"). DTC has Standard & Poor's highest rating: AAA. The DTC Rules applicable to its Participants are on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. More information about DTC can be found at www.dtcc.com and www.dtc.org.

Purchases of debt securities under the DTC system must be made by or through Direct Participants, which will receive a credit for the debt securities on DTC's records. The ownership interest of each actual purchaser of each debt security ("Beneficial Owner") is in turn to be recorded on the Direct and Indirect Participants' records. Beneficial Owners will not receive written confirmation from DTC of their purchase. Beneficial Owners are, however, expected to receive written confirmations providing details of the transaction, as well as periodic statements of their holdings, from the Direct or Indirect Participant through which the Beneficial Owner entered into the transaction. Transfers of ownership interests in the debt securities are to be accomplished by entries made on the books of Direct and Indirect Participants acting on behalf of Beneficial Owners. Beneficial Owners will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in debt securities, except in the event that use of the book-entry system for the debt securities is discontinued.

To facilitate subsequent transfers, all debt securities deposited by Direct Participants with DTC are registered in the name of DTC's partnership nominee, Cede & Co., or such other name as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. The deposit of debt securities with DTC and their registration in the name of Cede & Co. or such other DTC nominee do not effect any change in

beneficial ownership. DTC has no knowledge of the actual Beneficial Owners of the debt securities; DTC's records reflect only the identity of the Direct Participants to whose accounts such debt securities are credited, which may or may not be the Beneficial Owners. The Direct and Indirect Participants will remain responsible for keeping account of their holdings on behalf of their customers.

Conveyance of notices and other communications by DTC to Direct Participants, by Direct Participants to Indirect Participants, and by Direct Participants and Indirect Participants to Beneficial Owners will be governed by arrangements among them, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements as may be in effect from time to time. Beneficial Owners of Securities may wish to take certain steps to augment the transmission to them of notices of significant events with respect to the debt securities, such as redemptions, tenders, defaults, and proposed amendments to the debt security documents. For example, Beneficial Owners of debt securities may wish to ascertain that the nominee holding the debt securities for their benefit has agreed to obtain and transmit notices to Beneficial Owners. In the alternative, Beneficial Owners may wish to provide their names and addresses to the registrar and request that copies of notices be provided directly to them.

Redemption notices shall be sent to DTC. If less than all of the debt securities within an issue are being redeemed, DTC's practice is to determine by lot the amount of the interest of each Direct Participant in such issue to be redeemed.

Neither DTC nor Cede & Co. (nor any other DTC nominee) will consent or vote with respect to debt securities unless authorized by a Direct Participant in accordance with DTC's procedures. Under its usual procedures, DTC mails an Omnibus Proxy to the Partnership as soon as possible after the record date. The Omnibus Proxy assigns Cede & Co.'s consenting or voting rights to those Direct Participants to whose accounts the debt securities are credited on the record date (identified in a listing attached to the Omnibus Proxy).

Redemption proceeds, distributions, and interest payments on the debt securities will be made to Cede & Co., or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. DTC's practice is to credit Direct Participants' accounts upon DTC's receipt of funds and corresponding detailed information from the Partnership or the Trustee, on payable date in accordance with their respective holdings shown on DTC's records. Payments by Participants to Beneficial Owners will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with debt securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in "street name," and will be the responsibility of such Participant and not of DTC nor its nominee, the Trustee, or the Partnership, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements as may be in effect from time to time. Payment of redemption proceeds, distributions, and dividend payments to Cede & Co. (or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC) is the responsibility of the Partnership or the Trustee, disbursement of such payments to Direct Participants will be the responsibility of DTC, and disbursement of such payments to Beneficial Owners will be the responsibility of Direct and Indirect Participants.

A Beneficial Owner shall give notice to elect to have its debt securities purchased or tendered, through its Participant, to any Tender/Remarketing Agent, and shall effect delivery of such debt securities by causing the Direct Participant to transfer the Participant's interest in the debt securities, on DTC's records, to the Tender/Remarketing Agent. The requirement for physical delivery of debt securities in connection with an optional tender or a mandatory purchase will be deemed satisfied when the ownership rights in the debt securities are transferred by Direct Participants on DTC's records and followed by a book-entry credit of tendered securities to the Tender/Remarketing Agent's DTC account.

DTC may discontinue providing its services as securities depository with respect to the debt securities at any time by giving reasonable notice to the Partnership or the Trustee. Under such

circumstances, in the event that a successor securities depository is not obtained, securities certificates are required to be printed and delivered.

We may decide to discontinue use of the system of book-entry transfers through DTC (or a successor securities depository). In that event, securities certificates will be printed and delivered to DTC.

The information in this section concerning DTC and DTC's book-entry system has been obtained from sources that the Partnership believes to be reliable, but the Partnership takes no responsibility for the accuracy thereof.

The Trustee

Resignation or Removal of Trustee

Under provisions of the indentures and the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, governing trustee conflicts of interest, any uncured Event of Default with respect to any series of senior debt securities will force the trustee to resign as trustee under either the subordinated indenture or the senior indenture. Also, any uncured Event of Default with respect to any series of subordinated debt securities will force the trustee to resign as trustee under either the senior indenture or the subordinated indenture. Any resignation will require the appointment of a successor trustee under the applicable indenture in accordance with the terms and conditions of such indenture. We may appoint a separate trustee for any series of debt securities. We use the term "Trustee" to refer to the trustee appointed with respect to any such series of debt securities. The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of any series may remove the Trustee with respect to the debt securities of such series.

Limitations on Trustee if it is a Creditor of TC PipeLines

Each indenture may contain certain limitations on the right of the Trustee thereunder, in the event that it becomes a creditor of TC PipeLines, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases, or to realize on certain property received in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise.

Annual Trustee Report to Holders of Debt Securities

The Trustee is required to submit an annual report to the holders of the debt securities regarding, among other things, the Trustee's eligibility to serve as such, the priority of the Trustee's claims regarding certain advances made by it, and any action taken by the Trustee materially affecting the debt securities.

Certificates and Opinions to be Furnished to Trustee

Each indenture will provide that, in addition to other certificates or opinions that may be specifically required by other provisions of an indenture, every application by us for action by the Trustee shall be accompanied by a certificate of certain of our officers and an opinion of counsel (who may be our counsel) stating that, in the opinion of the signers, all conditions precedent to such action have been complied with by us.

MATERIAL TAX CONSIDERATIONS

This section is a summary of material federal income tax considerations that may be relevant to an investment in our common units and, unless otherwise noted in the following discussion, expresses the opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, our tax counsel, insofar as it relates to matters of United States federal income tax law and legal conclusions with respect to those matters. This section is based upon current provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, existing and proposed regulations thereunder and current administrative rulings and court decisions, all of which are subject to change. Later changes in these authorities may cause the tax consequences to vary substantially from the consequences described below.

The following discussion does not address all federal income tax matters affecting us or the unitholders. Moreover, the discussion focuses on unitholders who are individual citizens or residents of the United States and has only limited application to corporations, partnerships, estates, trusts, non-resident aliens or other unitholders subject to specialized tax treatment, such as tax-exempt institutions, foreign persons, individual retirement accounts, real estate investment trusts or mutual funds. Accordingly, we recommend that you consult, and depend on, your own tax advisor in analyzing the federal, state, local and foreign tax consequences to you of an investment in our securities.

All statements as to matters of law and legal conclusions, but not as to factual matters, contained in this section, unless otherwise noted, are the opinion of counsel and are based on the accuracy of the representations we make.

No ruling has been or will be requested from the IRS regarding any matter affecting us or prospective unitholders. Instead, we will rely on the opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in this regard. Unlike a ruling, an opinion of counsel represents only that counsel's best legal judgment and does not bind the IRS or the courts. Accordingly, the opinions and statements made herein may not be sustained by a court if contested by the IRS. Any contest of this sort with the IRS may materially and adversely impact the market for the common units and the prices at which the common units trade. In addition, the costs of any contest with the IRS will be borne directly or indirectly by the unitholders and the general partner. Furthermore, the tax treatment of us, or of an investment in us, may be significantly modified by future legislative or administrative changes or court decisions. Any modifications may or may not be retroactively applied.

For the reasons described below, counsel has not rendered an opinion with respect to the following specific federal income tax issues:

the treatment of a unitholder whose common units are loaned to a short seller to cover a short sale of common units (please read " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Treatment of Short Sales");

whether our monthly convention for allocating taxable income and losses is permitted by existing Treasury Regulations (please read " Disposition of Common Units Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees"); and

whether our method for depreciating Section 743 adjustments is sustainable in certain cases (please read " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election").

Partnership Status

A partnership is not a taxable entity and incurs no federal income tax liability. Instead, each partner of a partnership is required to take into account his allocable share of items of income, gain, loss and deduction of the partnership in computing his federal income tax liability, regardless of whether cash distributions are made to him by the partnership. Distributions by a partnership to a

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

partner are generally not taxable unless the amount of cash distributed to a partner is in excess of the partner's adjusted tax basis in his partnership interest.

No ruling has been or will be sought from the IRS with respect to our classification as a partnership for federal income tax purposes or as to the classification as partnerships of the Intermediate Partnerships or the Operating Partnerships, whether our operations generate "qualifying income" under Section 7704 of the Internal Revenue Code or any other matter affecting us or prospective unitholders. Instead we have relied on the opinion of counsel that, based upon the Internal Revenue Code, Treasury Regulations, published revenue rulings and court decisions and representations described below, we, the Intermediate Partnerships and the Operating Partnerships will each be classified as a partnership for federal income tax purposes.

In rendering its opinion that we, the Intermediate Partnerships and the Operating Partnerships have been and will continue to be treated as partnerships for federal income tax purposes, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP has relied on the factual representations made by us and the general partner, including:

None of TC PipeLines or any of the Intermediate Partnerships or the Operating Partnerships has elected or will elect to be treated as an association or corporation, and none of the Intermediate Partnerships or the Operating Partnerships has ever been a publicly-traded partnership;

For each taxable year, more than 90% of our gross income has been and will be derived from the exploration, development, production, processing, refining, transportation or marketing of any mineral or natural resource, including oil, gas, its products and industrial source carbon dioxide, or other items of income as to which counsel has or will opine are "qualifying income" within the meaning of Section 7704(d) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

Neither we nor any Intermediate Partnership or Operating Partnership has engaged or will engage in any significant activity other than the transportation (within the meaning of Section 7704(d) of the Internal Revenue Code) of natural gas without first receiving an opinion of counsel to the effect that such activity will not cause TC PipeLines or any Intermediate Partnership or Operating Partnership to have income that is not qualifying income.

Section 7704 of the Internal Revenue Code provides that publicly-traded partnerships will, as a general rule, be taxed as corporations. However, an exception, referred to as the "qualifying income exception," exists with respect to publicly-traded partnerships of which 90% or more of the gross income for every taxable year consists of "qualifying income." Qualifying income includes income and gains derived from the transportation and marketing of natural gas. Other types of qualifying income include interest from other than a financial business, dividends, gains from the sale of real property, and gains from the sale or other disposition of capital assets held for the production of income that otherwise constitutes qualifying income. We have satisfied the qualifying income test in each taxable year to date. We estimate that less than 4% of our current gross income is not qualifying income. The percentage of our gross income that constitutes qualifying income could change from time to time, but we project that the amount of non-qualifying gross income will not approach 10% of our gross income in any year. Based upon and subject to this estimate and projection, the factual representations made by us and the general partner and a review of the applicable legal authorities, counsel is of the opinion that at least 90% of our gross income constitutes qualifying income.

If we fail to meet the qualifying income exception, other than a failure that is determined by the IRS to be inadvertent and that is cured within a reasonable time after discovery, we will be treated as if we had transferred all of our assets, subject to liabilities, to a newly formed corporation, on the first day of the year in which we fail to meet the qualifying income exception, in return for stock in that corporation, and then distributed that stock to the partners in liquidation of their interests in us. This

contribution and liquidation should be tax-free to unitholders and TC PipeLines, so long as we, at that time, do not have liabilities in excess of the tax basis of our assets. Thereafter, we would be treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes.

If any of TC PipeLines, an Intermediate Partnership or an Operating Partnership were treated as an association taxable as a corporation in any taxable year, its items of income, gain, loss and deduction would be reflected only on its tax return rather than being passed through to its equity holders, and its net income would be taxed to it at corporate rates. In addition, any distributions by the affected entity to its equity holders would be treated as either taxable dividend income, to the extent of its current or accumulated earnings and profits, or, in the absence of earnings and profits, as a nontaxable return of capital, to the extent of the holder's tax basis in its equity interest in the entity, or as taxable capital gain, after the holder's tax basis in the equity interest is reduced to zero. Accordingly, treatment of TC PipeLines or any of the Intermediate Partnerships or the Operating Partnerships as an association taxable as a corporation would result in a material reduction in a unitholder's cash flow and after-tax return and thus would likely result in a substantial reduction of the value of the common units.

The discussion below is based on Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP's opinion that we, the Intermediate Partnerships and the Operating Partnerships will each be classified as a partnership for federal income tax purposes.

Limited Partner Status

Unitholders who have become limited partners of TC PipeLines will be treated as partners of TC PipeLines for federal income tax purposes. Assignees who have executed and delivered transfer applications and are awaiting admission as limited partners and unitholders whose common units are held in street name or by a nominee and who have the right to direct the nominee in the exercise of all substantive rights attendant to the ownership of their common units will also be treated as partners of TC PipeLines for federal income tax purposes. Because there is no direct or indirect controlling authority addressing assignees of common units who are entitled to execute and deliver transfer applications and thereby become entitled to direct the exercise of attendant rights, but who fail to execute and deliver transfer applications, counsel's opinion does not extend to these persons. Furthermore, a purchaser or other transferee of common units who does not execute and deliver a transfer application may not receive certain federal income tax information or reports furnished to record holders of common units unless the common units are held in a nominee or street name account and the nominee or broker has executed and delivered a transfer application for those common units.

A beneficial owner of common units whose common units have been transferred to a short seller to complete a short sale would appear to lose his status as a partner with respect to such common units for federal income tax purposes. Please read " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Treatment of Short Sales."

Income, gain, deductions or losses would not appear to be reportable by a unitholder who is not a partner for federal income tax purposes, and any cash distributions received by a unitholder who is not a partner for federal income tax purposes would therefore appear to be fully taxable as ordinary income. Such holders are urged to consult their own tax advisors with respect to their status as partners of TC PipeLines for federal income tax purposes.

Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership

Flow-Through of Taxable Income. We will not pay any federal income tax. Instead, each unitholder will be required to report on his income tax return his allocable share of our income, gains, losses and deductions without regard to whether we make cash distributions to him. Consequently, a unitholder may be allocated a share of our income even if he has not received a cash distribution. Each unitholder

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

must include in income his allocable share of our income, gain, loss and deduction for our taxable year ending with or within his taxable year. Our taxable year ends on December 31.

Treatment of Distributions. Our distributions to a unitholder generally will not be taxable to the unitholder for federal income tax purposes to the extent of his tax basis in his common units immediately before the distribution. Our cash distributions in excess of a unitholder's tax basis generally will be considered to be gain from the sale or exchange of the common units, taxable in accordance with the rules described under "Disposition of Common Units" below. Any reduction in a unitholder's share of our liabilities for which no partner, including the general partner, bears the economic risk of loss, known as "non-recourse liabilities," will be treated as a distribution of cash to that unitholder. To the extent that our distributions cause a unitholder's "at risk" amount to be less than zero at the end of any taxable year, he must recapture any losses deducted in previous years. Please read "Limitations on the Deductibility of Our Losses."

A decrease in a unitholder's percentage interest in us because of our issuance of additional common units will decrease his share of our non-recourse liabilities, and thus will result in a corresponding deemed distribution of cash. A non-pro rata distribution of money or property may result in ordinary income to a unitholder, regardless of his tax basis in his common units, if the distribution reduces the unitholder's share of our "unrealized receivables," including depreciation recapture, and/or substantially appreciated "inventory items," both as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, and collectively, "Section 751 Assets." To that extent, the unitholder will be treated as having been distributed his proportionate share of the Section 751 Assets and then having exchanged those assets with us in return for the non-pro rata portion of the actual distribution made to him. This latter deemed exchange will generally result in the unitholder's realization of ordinary income which will equal the excess of the non-pro rata portion of the distribution over the unitholder's tax basis for the share of the Section 751 Assets deemed relinquished in the exchange.

Basis of Common Units. A unitholder will have an initial tax basis for his common units equal to the amount he paid for the common units plus his share of our non-recourse liabilities. That basis will be increased by his share of our income and by any increases in his share of our non-recourse liabilities. That basis will be decreased, but not below zero, by distributions from us, by his share of our losses, by any decreases in his share of our non-recourse liabilities and by his share of our expenditures that are not deductible in computing our taxable income and are not required to be capitalized. A unitholder will have no share of our debt that is recourse to our general partner, but will have a share, generally based on his share of profits, of our non-recourse liabilities.

Limitations on Deductibility of Our Losses. The deduction by a unitholder of his share of our losses will be limited to his tax basis in his common units and, in the case of an individual unitholder or a corporate unitholder who is subject to the "at risk" rules, to the amount for which the unitholder is considered to be "at risk" with respect to our activities, if that is less than the unitholder's tax basis. A unitholder must recapture losses deducted in previous years to the extent that our distributions cause the unitholder's at risk amount to be less than zero at the end of any taxable year. Losses disallowed to a unitholder or recaptured as a result of these limitations will carry forward and will be allowable as a deduction in the future to the extent that his at risk amount is subsequently increased, provided such losses do not exceed his tax basis in his common units. Upon the taxable disposition of a common unit, any gain recognized by a unitholder can be offset by losses that were previously suspended by the at risk limitation but may not be offset by losses suspended by the basis limitation. Any loss previously suspended by the at-risk limitations in excess of that gain would no longer be utilizable.

In general, a unitholder will be at risk to the extent of his tax basis in his common units, excluding any portion of that basis attributable to his share of our non-recourse liabilities, reduced by any amount of money the unitholder borrows to acquire or hold his common units if the lender of such borrowed funds owns an interest in us, is related to the unitholder or can look only to common units for

repayment. A unitholder's at risk amount will increase or decrease as the tax basis of the unitholder's common units increases or decreases, other than tax basis increases or decreases attributable to increases or decreases in his share of our non-recourse liabilities.

In addition to the basis and at-risk limitations on the deductibility of losses, the passive loss limitations generally provide that individuals, estates, trusts and certain closely-held corporations and personal service corporations can deduct losses from passive activities, which are generally trade or business activities in which the taxpayer does not materially participate, only to the extent of the taxpayer's income from those passive activities. The passive loss limitations are applied separately with respect to each publicly-traded partnership. Consequently, any passive losses we generate will only be available to offset future income we generate and will not be available to offset income from other passive activities or investments, including other publicly-traded partnerships, or salary or active business income. Passive losses that are not deductible because they exceed a unitholder's share of our income may be deducted in full when he disposes of his entire investment in us in a fully taxable transaction to an unrelated party. The passive activity loss limitations are applied after other applicable limitations on deductions, including the at risk rules and the basis limitation.

A unitholder's share of our net income may be offset by any of our suspended passive losses we generate, but it may not be offset by any other current or carryover losses from other passive activities, including those attributable to other publicly-traded partnerships.

Limitations on Interest Deductions. The deductibility of a non-corporate taxpayer's "investment interest expense" is generally limited to the amount of that taxpayer's "net investment income." Investment interest expense includes:

interest on indebtedness properly allocable to property held for investment;

our interest expense attributed to portfolio income; and

the portion of interest expense incurred to purchase or carry an interest in a passive activity to the extent attributable to portfolio income.

The computation of a unitholder's investment interest expense will take into account interest on any margin account borrowing or other loan incurred to purchase or carry a common unit. Net investment income includes gross income from property held for investment and amounts treated as portfolio income under the passive loss rules less deductible expenses, other than interest, directly connected with the production of investment income, but generally does not include gains attributable to the disposition of property held for investment. The IRS has indicated that net passive income earned by a publicly-traded partnership will be treated as investment income to unitholders. In addition, a unitholder's share of our portfolio income will be treated as investment income.

Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction. In general, if we have a net profit, our items of income, gain, loss and deduction are allocated among the general partner and the unitholders in accordance with their respective percentage interests in us. At any time that incentive distributions are made to the general partner, gross income is allocated to the general partner to the extent of these distributions. If we have a net loss, that loss is generally allocated first, to our general partner and the unitholders in accordance with their respective percentage interests to the extent of their positive capital accounts, as maintained under the partnership agreement, and second, to our general partner.

Specified items of our income, deduction, gain and loss are allocated to account for the difference between the tax basis and fair market value of property contributed to us and to account for the difference between the tax basis and the fair market value of our property at the time of the offering of units in accordance with Section 704 of the Internal Revenue Code and the Treasury Regulations thereunder. The effect of these allocations to a unitholder purchasing common units in an offering, including the offering made pursuant to this prospectus, will be essentially the same as if the tax basis

of our assets were equal to their fair market value at the time of purchase. In addition, items of recapture income are allocated to the extent possible to the partner who was allocated the deduction giving rise to the treatment of that gain as recapture income. Finally, although we do not expect that our operations will result in the creation of negative capital accounts to unitholders, if negative capital accounts nevertheless result, items of our income and gain will be allocated in an amount and manner sufficient to eliminate the negative balance as quickly as possible.

An allocation of items of our income, gain, loss or deduction, other than an allocation required by the Internal Revenue Code to eliminate the difference between a partner's "book" capital account and "tax" capital account, will generally be given effect for federal income tax purposes in determining a partner's share of an item of income, gain, loss or deduction only if the allocation has substantial economic effect. In any other case, a partner's share of an item will be determined on the basis of the partner's interest in us, which will be determined by taking into account all the facts and circumstances, including the partners' relative contributions to us, the interests of the partners in economic profits and losses, the interest of the partners in cash flow and other nonliquidating distributions and rights of the partners to distributions of capital upon liquidation. Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP is of the opinion that, with the exception of the issues described in " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election" and " Disposition of Common Units Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees," the allocations under our partnership agreement will be given effect for federal income tax purposes in determining a partner's share of an item of income, gain, loss or deduction.

Entity-Level Collections. If we are required or elect under applicable law to pay any federal, state or local income tax on behalf of any unitholder or the general partner or any former unitholder, we are authorized to pay those taxes from our funds. That payment, if made, will be treated as a distribution of cash to the partner on whose behalf the payment was made. If the payment is made on behalf of a person whose identity cannot be determined, we are authorized to treat the payment as a distribution to current unitholders. We are authorized to amend our partnership agreement in the manner necessary to maintain uniformity of intrinsic tax characteristics of common units and to adjust subsequent distributions, so that after giving effect to these distributions, the priority and characterization of distributions otherwise applicable under our partnership agreement is maintained as nearly as is practicable. Payments by us as described above could give rise to an overpayment of tax on behalf of an individual partner in which event the partner would be required to file a claim in order to obtain a credit or refund.

Treatment of Short Sales. A unitholder whose common units are loaned to a "short seller" to cover a short sale of common units may be considered as having disposed of ownership of those common units. If so, he would no longer be treated for tax purposes as a partner with respect to those common units during the period of the loan and may recognize gain or loss from the disposition. As a result, during this period:

any of our income, gain, deduction or loss with respect to those common units would not be reportable by the unitholder;

any cash distributions received by the unitholder with respect to those common units would be fully taxable; and

all of these distributions would appear to be treated as ordinary income.

Counsel has not rendered an opinion regarding the treatment of a unitholder whose common units are loaned to a short seller to cover a short sale of common units; therefore, unitholders desiring to assure their status as partners and avoid the risk of gain recognition from a loan to a short seller are urged to modify any applicable brokerage account agreements to prohibit their brokers from loaning their common units. The IRS has announced that it is actively studying issues relating to the tax

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

treatment of short sales of partnership interests. Please also read " Disposition of Common Units Recognition of Gain or Loss."

Alternative Minimum Tax. Each unitholder will be required to take into account his distributive share of any of our items of income, gain, deduction or loss for purposes of the alternative minimum tax. Prospective unitholders are urged to consult with their tax advisors as to the impact of an investment in common units on their liability for the alternative minimum tax.

Section 754 Election. We have made the election permitted by Section 754 of the Internal Revenue Code. The election is irrevocable without the consent of the IRS. The election generally permits us to adjust a common unit purchaser's tax basis in our assets ("inside basis") under Section 743(b) of the Internal Revenue Code to reflect his purchase price. This election does not apply to a person who purchases units directly from us. The Section 743(b) adjustment belongs to the purchaser and not to other partners. For purposes of this discussion, a partner's inside basis in our assets will be considered to have two components: (1) his share of our tax basis in our assets ("common basis") and (2) his Section 743(b) adjustment to that basis.

Treasury Regulations under Section 743 of the Internal Revenue Code require a partnership that adopts the remedial allocation method (which we have adopted) to depreciate any portion of the Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to Section 704(c) built-in gain on recovery property under Section 168 of the Internal Revenue Code over the remaining recovery period for such Section 704(c) built-in gain. Treasury Regulations under Section 197 similarly require any portion of the Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to Section 704(c) built-in gain on amortizable Section 197 intangibles to be amortized over the remaining amortization period for such Section 704(c) built-in gain. Under Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6), a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to property subject to depreciation under Section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code rather than cost recovery deductions under Section 168 of the Internal Revenue Code is generally required to be depreciated using either the straight-line method or the 150% declining balance method. Under our partnership agreement, we have adopted a convention to preserve the uniformity of common units even if that convention is not consistent with specified Treasury Regulations. Please read " Uniformity of Common Units."

Although counsel is unable to opine as to the validity of this method because there is no direct or indirect controlling authority on this issue, we depreciate the portion of a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to unrealized appreciation in the value of property contributed to us, to the extent of any unamortized Section 704(c) built-in gain, using a rate of depreciation or amortization derived from the depreciation or amortization method and useful life applied to the common basis of the property, or treat that portion as non-amortizable to the extent attributable to property the common basis of which is not amortizable. This method is consistent with the regulations under Section 743 but is arguably inconsistent with Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6). To the extent this Section 743(b) adjustment is attributable to appreciation in value in excess of the unamortized Section 704(c) built-in gain, we will apply the rules described in the Treasury Regulations and legislative history. If we determine that this position cannot reasonably be taken, we may adopt a depreciation or amortization convention under which all purchasers acquiring common units in the same month would receive depreciation or amortization, whether attributable to common basis or Section 743(b) adjustment, based upon the same applicable rate as if they had purchased a direct interest in our assets. This kind of aggregate approach may result in lower annual depreciation or amortization deductions than would otherwise be allowable to specified unitholders. Please read " Uniformity of Common Units."

A Section 754 election is advantageous if the transferee's tax basis in his common units is higher than the common units' share of the aggregate tax basis of our assets immediately prior to the transfer. In that case, as a result of the election, the transferee would have a higher tax basis in his share of our assets for purposes of calculating, among other items, his depreciation and depletion deductions and his

share of any gain or loss on a sale of our assets. Conversely, a Section 754 election is disadvantageous if the transferee's tax basis in his common units is lower than such common units' share of the aggregate tax basis of our assets immediately prior to the transfer. Thus, the fair market value of the common units may be affected either favorably or adversely by the election. A basis adjustment is required regardless of whether a Section 754 election is made in the case of a transfer of an interest in us if we have a substantial built-in loss immediately after the transfer, or if we distribute property and have a substantial basis reduction. Generally, a built-in loss or a basis reduction is substantial if it exceeds \$250,000.

The calculations involved in the Section 754 election are complex and we will make them on the basis of assumptions as to the value of our assets and other matters. The allocation of the Section 743(b) adjustment must be made in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code. The IRS may seek to reallocate some or all of any Section 743(b) adjustment allocated by us to tangible assets to goodwill instead. Goodwill, as an intangible asset, is generally amortizable over a longer period of time or under a less accelerated method than our tangible assets. We cannot assure you that the determinations we make will not be successfully challenged by the IRS and the deductions resulting from them reduced or disallowed altogether. Should the IRS require a different basis adjustment to be made, and should, in our view, the expense of compliance exceed the benefit of the election, we may seek permission from the IRS to revoke our Section 754 election. If permission is granted, a subsequent purchaser of common units may be allocated more income than he would have been allocated had the election not been revoked.

Tax Treatment of Operations

Accounting Method and Taxable Year. We currently use the year ending December 31 as our taxable year and we have adopted the accrual method of accounting for federal income tax purposes. Each unitholder will be required to include in income his allocable share of our income, gain, loss and deduction for our taxable year ending within or with his taxable year. In addition, a unitholder who has a taxable year ending on a date other than December 31 and who disposes of all of his units following the close of our taxable year but before the close of his taxable year must include his allocable share of our income, gain, loss and deduction in income for his taxable year, with the result that he will be required to include in income for his taxable year his share of more than one year of our income, gain, loss and deduction. Please read " *Disposition of Common Units Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees.*"

Tax Basis, Depreciation and Amortization. The adjusted tax basis of our assets will be used for purposes of computing depreciation and cost recovery deductions and, ultimately adjusted gain or loss on the disposition of these assets. The federal income tax burden associated with the difference between the fair market value of our assets and their tax basis immediately prior to any offering will be borne by the general partner and other unitholders as of that time. Please read " *Tax Treatment of Unitholders Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction.*"

To the extent allowable, we may elect to use the depreciation and cost recovery methods that will result in the largest deductions being taken in the early years after assets are placed in service. If we dispose of depreciable property by sale, foreclosure, or otherwise, all or a portion of any gain, determined by reference to the amount of depreciation previously deducted and the nature of the property, may be subject to the recapture rules and taxed as ordinary income rather than capital gain. Similarly, a unitholder who has taken cost recovery or depreciation deductions with respect to property we own may be required to recapture those deductions as ordinary income upon a sale of his interest in us. Please read " *Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction*" and " *Disposition of Common Units Recognition of Gain or Loss.*"

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

The costs incurred in selling our common units (called "syndication expenses") must be capitalized and cannot be deducted currently, ratably or upon our termination. Uncertainties exist regarding the classification of costs as organization expenses, which may be amortized by us, and as syndication expenses, which may not be amortized. The underwriting discounts and commissions we incur are treated as syndication expenses.

Valuation and Tax Basis of Our Properties. The federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of common units will depend in part on our estimates as to the relative fair market values, and determinations of the initial tax bases, of our assets. Although we may from time to time consult with professional appraisers with respect to valuation matters, we will make many of the relative fair market value estimates ourselves. These estimates and determinations of basis are subject to challenge and will not be binding on the IRS or the courts. If the estimates of fair market value or determinations of basis are later found to be incorrect, the character and amount of items of income, gain, loss or deductions previously reported by unitholders might change, and unitholders might be required to adjust their tax liability for prior years and incur interest and penalties with respect to these adjustments.

Disposition of Common Units

Recognition of Gain or Loss. A unitholder will recognize gain or loss on a sale of common units equal to the difference between the amount realized and the unitholder's tax basis for the common units sold. A unitholder's amount realized will be measured by the sum of the cash or the fair market value of other property received plus his share of our non-recourse liabilities. Because the amount realized includes a unitholder's share of our non-recourse liabilities, the gain recognized on the sale of common units could result in a tax liability in excess of any cash received from the sale.

Prior distributions from us in excess of cumulative net taxable income for a common unit that decreased a unitholder's tax basis in that common unit will, in effect, become taxable income if the common unit is sold at a price greater than the unitholder's tax basis in that common unit, even if the price is less than his original cost.

Except as noted below, gain or loss recognized by a unitholder, other than a "dealer" in common units, on the sale or exchange of a common unit will generally be taxable as capital gain or loss. Gain or loss recognized on the sale of common units held for more than 12 months will generally be taxed as long-term capital gain or loss. However, a portion of this gain or loss, which could be substantial, will be separately computed and taxed as ordinary income or loss under Section 751 of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent attributable to assets giving rise to "unrealized receivables" or to "inventory items" we own. The term "unrealized receivables" includes potential recapture items, including depreciation recapture. Ordinary income attributable to unrealized receivables, inventory items and depreciation recapture may exceed net taxable gain realized upon the sale of the common unit and may be recognized even if there is a net taxable loss realized on the sale of the common unit. Thus, a unitholder may recognize both ordinary income and a capital loss upon a disposition of common units. Net capital loss may offset no more than \$3,000 of ordinary income in the case of individuals and may only be used to offset capital gain in the case of corporations.

The IRS has ruled that a partner who acquires interests in a partnership in separate transactions must combine those interests and maintain a single adjusted tax basis for all those interests. Upon a sale or other disposition of less than all of those interests, a portion of that tax basis must be allocated to the interests sold using an "equitable apportionment" method, which generally means that the tax basis allocated to the interest sold equals the amount that bears the same relation to the partner's tax basis in his entire interest in the partnership as the value of the interest sold bears to the value of the partner's entire interest in the partnership. Treasury Regulations under Section 1223 of the Internal Revenue Code allow a selling unitholder who can identify common units transferred with an

ascertainable holding period to elect to use the actual holding period of the common units transferred. A unitholder electing to use the actual holding period of common units transferred must consistently use that identification method for all subsequent sales or exchanges of common units. A unitholder considering the purchase of additional common units or a sale of common units purchased in separate transactions is urged to consult with his tax advisor as to the possible consequences of the application of this ruling and the Treasury Regulations.

Specific provisions of the Internal Revenue Code affect the taxation of some financial products and securities, including partnership interests, by treating a taxpayer as having sold an "appreciated" partnership interest, one in which gain would be recognized if it were sold, assigned or terminated at its fair market value, if the taxpayer or a related person enters into a short sale, an offsetting notional principal contract or a futures or forward contract with respect to the partnership interest or substantially identical property.

Moreover, if a taxpayer has previously entered into a short sale, an offsetting notional principal contract or a futures or forward contract with respect to a partnership interest, the taxpayer will be treated as having sold that position if the taxpayer or a related person then acquires the partnership interest or substantially identical property. The Secretary of the Treasury is also authorized to issue regulations that treat a taxpayer that enters into transactions or positions that have substantially the same effect as the preceding transactions as having constructively sold the financial position.

Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees. In general, our taxable income and losses are determined annually, are prorated on a monthly basis and are subsequently apportioned among the unitholders in proportion to the number of common units owned by each of them as of the opening of the NASDAQ National Market on the first business day of the month (the "Allocation Date"). However, gain or loss realized on a sale or other disposition of our assets other than in the ordinary course of business is allocated among the unitholders on the Allocation Date in the month in which that gain or loss is recognized. As a result, a unitholder transferring common units in the open market may be allocated income, gain, loss and deduction accrued after the date of transfer.

The use of this method may not be permitted under existing Treasury Regulations. Accordingly, counsel is unable to opine on the validity of this method of allocating income and deductions between the transferors and the transferees of common units. If this method is not allowed under the Treasury Regulations, or only applies to transfers of less than all of the unitholder's interest, our taxable income or losses might be reallocated among the unitholders. We are authorized to revise our method of allocation between transferors and transferees, as well as among partners whose interests otherwise vary during a taxable period, to conform to a method permitted under future Treasury Regulations.

A unitholder who owns common units at any time during a quarter and who disposes of these common units prior to the record date set for a cash distribution with respect to that quarter will be allocated items of our income, gain, loss and deductions attributable to that quarter but will not be entitled to receive that cash distribution.

Notification Requirements. A unitholder who sells or exchanges common units is required to notify us in writing of that sale or exchange within 30 days after the sale or exchange (or, if earlier, January 15 of the year following the sale). A purchaser of units from another unitholder is also generally required to notify us in writing of that purchase within 30 days after the purchase. We are required to notify the IRS of that transaction and to furnish specified information to the transferor and transferee. However, these reporting requirements do not apply with respect to a sale by an individual who is a citizen of the United States and who effects the sale or exchange through a broker who will satisfy such requirements. Additionally, a transferee of a common unit will be required to furnish a statement to the IRS, filed with its income tax return for the taxable year in which the sale or exchange occurred, that sets forth the amount of the consideration paid for the common unit. Failure to satisfy these reporting obligations may lead to the imposition of substantial penalties.

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

Constructive Termination. We will be considered to have been terminated if there is a sale or exchange of 50% or more of the total interests in our capital and profits within a 12-month period. Our termination would result in the closing of our taxable year for all unitholders. In the case of a unitholder reporting on a taxable year other than a fiscal year ending December 31, the closing of our taxable year may result in more than 12 months of our taxable income or loss being includable in his taxable income for the year of termination. We would be required to make new tax elections after a termination, including a new election under Section 754 of the Internal Revenue Code, and a termination could result in a deferral of our deductions for depreciation. A termination could also result in penalties if we were unable to determine that the termination had occurred. Moreover, a termination might either accelerate the application of, or subject us to, any tax legislation enacted before to the termination.

Uniformity of Common Units

Because we cannot match transferors and transferees of common units, we must maintain uniformity of the economic and tax characteristics of the common units to a purchaser of these common units. In the absence of uniformity, compliance with a number of federal income tax requirements, both statutory and regulatory, could be substantially diminished. A lack of uniformity can result from a literal application of Treasury Regulations dealing with Section 743 adjustments. Any non-uniformity could have a negative impact on the value of the common units. Please read " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election."

Consistent with the regulations under Section 743, we depreciate the portion of a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to unrealized appreciation in the value of contributed property, to the extent of any unamortized Section 704(c) built-in gain, using a rate of depreciation or amortization derived from the depreciation or amortization method and useful life applied to the common basis of that property, or treat that portion as nonamortizable, to the extent attributable to property the common basis of which is not amortizable. This method is consistent with the regulations under Section 743, but is arguably inconsistent with Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6), which is not expected to apply with respect to a material portion of our assets. To the extent that the Section 743(b) adjustment is attributable to appreciation in value in excess of the unamortized Section 704(c) built-in gain, we apply the rules described in the Treasury Regulations and legislative history. If we determine that this position cannot reasonably be taken, we may adopt a depreciation and amortization convention under which all purchasers acquiring common units in the same month would receive depreciation and amortization deductions, whether attributable to common basis or Section 743(b) adjustment, based upon the same applicable rate as if they had purchased a direct interest in our property. If this approach is adopted, it may result in lower annual depreciation and amortization deductions than would otherwise be allowable to some unitholders and risk the loss of depreciation and amortization deductions not taken in the year that these deductions are otherwise allowable. This approach will not be adopted if we determine that the loss of depreciation and amortization deductions will have a material adverse effect on the unitholders. If we choose not to utilize this aggregate method, we may use any other reasonable depreciation and amortization convention to preserve the uniformity of the intrinsic tax characteristics of any common units that would not have a material adverse effect on the unitholders. Counsel has not opined as to the validity of any of these positions. The IRS may challenge any method of depreciating the Section 743(b) adjustment described in this paragraph. If this type of challenge were sustained, the uniformity of common units might be affected, and the gain from the sale of common units might be increased without the benefit of additional deductions. Please read " Disposition of Common Units Recognition of Gain or Loss."

Tax-Exempt Organizations and Other Investors

Ownership of common units by employee benefit plans, other tax-exempt organizations, nonresident aliens and foreign corporations and other foreign persons raises issues unique to those investors and, as described below, may have substantially adverse tax consequences to them.

Employee benefit plans and most other organizations exempt from federal income tax, including individual retirement accounts and other retirement plans, are subject to federal income tax on unrelated business taxable income. Virtually all of our taxable income allocated to a unitholder which is a tax-exempt organization will be unrelated business taxable income and will be taxable to that unitholder.

Non-resident aliens and foreign corporations, trusts or estates which hold common units will be considered to be engaged in business in the United States because of ownership of common units. As a consequence they will be required to file federal tax returns in respect of their share of our income, gain, loss or deduction and pay federal income tax at regular rates on any net income or gain. Generally, a partnership is required to pay a withholding tax on the portion of the partnership's income which is effectively connected with the conduct of a United States trade or business and which is allocable to the foreign partners, regardless of whether any actual distributions have been made to such partners. However, under rules applicable to publicly-traded partnerships, we will withhold at applicable rates on actual cash distributions made quarterly to foreign unitholders. Each foreign unitholder must obtain a taxpayer identification number from the IRS and submit that number to our transfer agent on an applicable Form W-8 (or other applicable form) in order to obtain credit for the taxes withheld. A change in applicable law may require us to change these procedures.

Because a foreign corporation which owns common units will be treated as engaged in a United States trade or business, that corporation may be subject to United States branch profits tax at a rate of 30%, in addition to regular federal income tax, on its allocable share of our income and gain, as adjusted for changes in the foreign corporation's "U.S. net equity," which is effectively connected with the conduct of a United States trade or business. An income tax treaty between the United States and the country in which the foreign corporate unitholder is a "qualified resident" may reduce or eliminate this tax. In addition, such a unitholder is subject to special information reporting requirements under Section 6038C of the Internal Revenue Code.

The IRS has ruled that a foreign partner who sells or otherwise disposes of an interest in a partnership will be subject to federal income tax on gain realized on the disposition of that partnership interest to the extent that the gain is deemed to be effectively connected with a United States trade or business of the foreign partner. Apart from this ruling, a foreign partner would not be taxed upon the disposition of a common unit if that foreign unitholder has held less than 5% in value of the common units during the five-year period ending on the date of the disposition and if the common units are regularly traded on an established securities market at the time of the disposition.

Administrative Matters

Information Returns and Audit Procedures. We intend to furnish to each unitholder, within 90 days after the close of each calendar year, specific tax information, including a Schedule K-1, which describes each unitholder's share of our income, gain, loss and deduction for our preceding taxable year. In preparing this information, which will generally not be reviewed by counsel, we will use various accounting and reporting conventions, some of which have been mentioned in the previous discussion, to determine the unitholder's share of income, gain, loss and deduction. Any of these conventions may not yield a result which conforms to the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code, Treasury Regulations or administrative interpretations of the IRS. Neither we nor counsel can assure prospective unitholders that the IRS will not successfully contend in court that those accounting and reporting

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

conventions are impermissible. Any challenge by the IRS could negatively affect the value of the common units.

The IRS may audit our federal income tax information returns. Adjustments resulting from an audit of this kind may require each unitholder to adjust a prior year's tax liability, and possibly may result in an audit of the unitholder's own return. Any audit of a unitholder's return could result in adjustments not related to our returns as well as those related to our returns.

Partnerships generally are treated as separate entities for purposes of federal tax audits, judicial review of administrative adjustments by the IRS and tax settlement proceedings. The tax treatment of partnership items of income, gain, loss and deduction are determined in a partnership proceeding rather than in separate proceedings with the partners. The Internal Revenue Code provides for one partner to be designated as the "tax matters partner" for these purposes. Our partnership agreement appoints the general partner as our tax matters partner.

The tax matters partner will make some elections on our behalf and on behalf of the unitholders and can extend the statute of limitations for assessment of tax deficiencies against unitholders with respect to items in our returns. The tax matters partner may bind a unitholder with less than a 1% profits interest in us to a settlement with the IRS unless that unitholder elects, by filing a statement with the IRS, not to give that authority to the tax matters partner. The tax matters partner may seek judicial review, by which all the unitholders are bound, of a final partnership administrative adjustment and, if the tax matters partner fails to seek judicial review, judicial review may be sought by any unitholder having at least a 1% interest in our profits and by the unitholders having in the aggregate at least a 5% profits interest. However, only one action for judicial review will go forward, and each unitholder with an interest in the outcome may participate.

A unitholder must file a statement with the IRS identifying the treatment of any item on his federal income tax return that is not consistent with the treatment of the item on our return. Intentional or negligent disregard of the consistency requirement may subject a unitholder to substantial penalties.

Nominee Reporting. Persons who hold an interest in us as a nominee for another person are required to furnish to us:

the name, address and taxpayer identification number of the beneficial owner and the nominee;

whether the beneficial owner is

a person that is not a United States person,

a foreign government, an international organization or any wholly-owned agency or instrumentality of either of the foregoing, or

a tax-exempt entity;

the amount and description of common units held, acquired or transferred for the beneficial owner; and

specific information including the dates of acquisitions and transfers, means of acquisitions and transfers, and acquisition cost for purchases, as well as the amount of net proceeds from sales.

Brokers and financial institutions are required to furnish additional information, including whether they are United States persons and specific information on common units they acquire, hold or transfer for their own account. A penalty of \$50 per failure, up to a maximum of \$100,000 per calendar year, is imposed by the Internal Revenue Code for failure to report such information to us. The nominee is required to supply the beneficial owner of the common units with the information furnished to us.

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

Reportable Transactions. Treasury regulations require taxpayers to report certain information on IRS Form 8886 if they participate in a "reportable transaction." Unitholders may be required to file this form with the IRS if we participate in a "reportable transaction." A transaction may be a reportable transaction based upon any of several factors, including the fact that it is a type of tax avoidance transaction publicly identified by the IRS as a "listed transaction" or that it produces certain kinds of losses in excess of \$2 million in any single tax year or \$4 million in any combination of tax years. Each unitholder is urged to consult with his own tax advisor concerning the application of any of these factors to his ownership of common units. Our participation in a reportable transaction could increase the likelihood that our federal income tax return (and possibly a unitholder's tax return) would be audited by the IRS. Please read " Information Returns and Audit Procedures."

Moreover, if we were to participate in a reportable transaction with a significant purpose to avoid or evade tax, or in any listed transaction, a unitholder may be subject to the following provisions of the Code:

accuracy-related penalties with a broader scope, significantly narrower exceptions, and potentially greater amounts than described below at " Accuracy-Related Penalties,"

for those persons otherwise entitled to deduct interest on federal tax deficiencies, nondeductibility of interest on any resulting tax liability, and

in the case of a listed transaction, an extended statute of limitations.

We do not expect to engage in any "reportable transactions."

Accuracy-Related Penalties. An additional tax equal to 20% of the amount of any portion of an underpayment of tax that is attributable to one or more specified causes, including negligence or disregard of rules or regulations, substantial understatements of income tax and substantial valuation misstatements, is imposed by the Internal Revenue Code. No penalty will be imposed, however, with respect to any portion of an underpayment if it is shown that there was a reasonable cause for that portion and that the taxpayer acted in good faith with respect to that portion.

For individuals, a substantial understatement of income tax in any taxable year exists if the amount of the understatement exceeds the greater of 10% of the tax required to be shown on the return for the taxable year or \$5,000. The amount of any understatement subject to penalty generally is reduced if any portion is attributable to a position adopted on the return:

for which there is, or was, "substantial authority;" or

as to which there is a reasonable basis and the pertinent facts of such position are disclosed on the return.

If any item of our income, gain, loss or deduction included in the distributive shares of unitholders might result in that kind of "understatement" of income for which no "substantial authority" exists, we must disclose the pertinent facts on our return. In addition, we will make a reasonable effort to furnish sufficient information for unitholders to make adequate disclosure on their returns to avoid liability for this penalty. More stringent rules apply to "tax shelters," a term that in this context does not appear to include us.

A substantial valuation misstatement exists if the value of any property, or the adjusted basis of any property, claimed on a tax return is 150% or more of the amount determined to be the correct amount of such valuation or adjusted basis. No penalty is imposed unless the portion of the underpayment attributable to a substantial valuation misstatement exceeds \$5,000 (\$10,000 for most corporations). If the valuation claimed on a return is 200% or more than the correct valuation, the penalty imposed increases to 40%.

State, Local and Other Tax Considerations

In addition to federal income taxes, a unitholder will be subject to other taxes, including state and local income taxes, unincorporated business taxes, and estate, inheritance or intangible taxes that may be imposed by the various jurisdictions in which he resides or in which we do business or own property. Although an analysis of those various taxes is not presented here, each prospective unitholder should consider their potential impact on his investment in us. A unitholder will be required to file state income tax returns and to pay state income taxes in some or all of the states in which we do business or own property and may be subject to penalties for failure to comply with those requirements. In some states, tax losses may not produce a tax benefit in the year incurred and also may not be available to offset income in subsequent taxable years. Some of the states may require us, or we may elect, to withhold a percentage of income from amounts to be distributed to a unitholder who is not a resident of the state. Withholding, the amount of which may be greater or less than a particular unitholder's income tax liability to the state, generally does not relieve the nonresident unitholder from the obligation to file an income tax return. Amounts withheld may be treated as if distributed to unitholders for purposes of determining the amounts distributed by us. Please read " Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Entity-Level Collections."

It is the responsibility of each unitholder to investigate the legal and tax consequences under the laws of pertinent jurisdictions of his investment in us. Accordingly, we recommend that each prospective unitholder consult, and depend upon, his own tax counsel or other advisor with regard to those matters. Further, it is the responsibility of each unitholder to file all state and local, as well as U.S. federal and non-U.S., tax returns that may be required of him. Counsel has not rendered an opinion on the state or local tax consequences of an investment in us.

Tax Consequences of Ownership of Debt Securities

A description of the material federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of debt securities will be included in the prospectus supplement relating to the offering of debt securities.

INVESTMENT IN TC PIPELINES, LP BY EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

An investment in us by an employee benefit plan is subject to additional considerations because the investments of such plans are subject to the fiduciary responsibility and prohibited transaction provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA"), and restrictions imposed by Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code if such plans are subject to Title I of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code. As used herein, the term "employee benefit plan" or "plan" includes, but is not limited to, tax-qualified pension, profit-sharing and stock bonus plans, Keogh plans, simplified employee pension plans, and tax-deferred annuities or individual retirement accounts established or maintained by an employer or employee organization. Among other things, consideration should be given to:

whether such investment is prudent under Section 404(a)(1)(B) of ERISA;

whether in making such investment such plan will satisfy the diversification requirement of Section 404(a)(1)(C) of ERISA;

the fact that such investment could result in recognition of unrelated business taxable income by such plan even if there is no net income and, if so, the potential after-tax return could be reduced;

the effect of an imposition of income taxes on the potential investment return for an otherwise tax-exempt investor; and

whether, as a result of the investment, such plan will be required to file an exempt organization business income tax return with the IRS.

The person with investment discretion with respect to the assets of an employee benefit plan should determine whether an investment in us is authorized by the appropriate governing instrument and is a prudent investment for such plan.

In addition, a fiduciary of an employee benefit plan should consider whether such plan will, by investing in us, be deemed to own an undivided interest in our assets. If so, the general partner also would be a fiduciary of such plan, and we would be subject to the regulatory restrictions of ERISA, including its prohibited transaction rules, as well as the prohibited transaction rules of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 406 of ERISA and Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code prohibit an employee benefit plan from engaging in transactions involving "plan assets" with parties that are "parties in interest" under ERISA or "disqualified persons" under the Internal Revenue Code with respect to the plan. These provisions also apply to individual retirement accounts which are not subject to Title I of ERISA. The U.S. Department of Labor issued final regulations on November 13, 1986 that provide guidance with respect to whether the assets of an entity in which employee benefit plans acquire equity interests would be deemed "plan assets." Pursuant to these regulations, an entity's assets would not be considered to be "plan assets" if, among other things,

- (1) the equity interests acquired by employee benefit plans or other "benefit plan investors" (as defined in Section 3(42) of ERISA) are publicly offered securities, i.e., the equity interests are widely held by 100 or more investors independent of the issuer and each other, freely transferable and registered under the federal securities laws;
- (2) the entity is an "operating company," i.e., it is primarily engaged in the production or sale of a product or service other than the investment of capital either directly or through a majority-owned subsidiary or subsidiaries; or
- (3) there is no significant investment by benefit plan investors, which is defined to mean that less than 25% of the value of each class of equity interest is held by employee benefit plans

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

(as defined in Section 3(3) of ERISA) that are subject to Title I of ERISA, plans described in Section 4975(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code, and any entities whose underlying assets include "plan assets" by reason of a plan's investments in the entity.

Our assets would not be considered "plan assets" under these regulations because it is expected that the investment will satisfy the requirements in (1) above. Plan fiduciaries contemplating a purchase of common units should consult with their own counsel regarding the consequences under ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code in light of the serious penalties imposed on persons who engage in prohibited transactions or other violations.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities being offered hereby:

directly to purchasers,

through agents, or

through underwriters or dealers.

We, or agents designated by us, may directly solicit, from time to time, offers to purchase the securities. Any such agent may be deemed to be an underwriter as that term is defined in the Securities Act. We will name the agents involved in the offer or sale of the securities and describe any commissions payable by us or to these agents in the prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise indicated in the prospectus supplement, these agents will be acting on a best efforts basis for the period of their appointment. The agents may be entitled under agreements which may be entered into with us to indemnification by us against specific civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. The agents may also be our customers or may engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

If we utilize any underwriters in the sale of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered, we will enter into an underwriting agreement with those underwriters at the time of sale to them. We will set forth the names of these underwriters and the terms of the transaction in the prospectus supplement, which will be used by the underwriters to make resales of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered to the public. The underwriters may be entitled, under the relevant underwriting agreement, to indemnification by us against specific liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. The underwriters may also be our customers or may engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

If we utilize a dealer in the sale of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered, we will sell those securities to the dealer, as principal. The dealer may then resell those securities to the public at varying prices to be determined by the dealer at the time of resale. Dealers may be entitled to indemnification by us against specific liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. The dealers may also be our customers or may engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

We may engage one or more firms to act as our agent (the "Offering Agent") for one or more offerings, from time to time, of our common units. If we reach agreement with the Offering Agent with respect to a specific offering, including the number of common units and any minimum price below which sales may not be made, then the Offering Agent would agree to use its commercially reasonable efforts, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices, to try to sell such common units on the agreed terms. The Offering Agent could make sales in privately negotiated transactions and/or any other method permitted by law, including sales deemed to be an "at the market" offering as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act, including sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange. The Offering Agent will be deemed to be an "underwriter" within the meaning of the Securities Act, with respect to any sales effected through an "at the market" offering.

Common units and debt securities may also be sold directly by us. In this case, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may use electronic media, including the Internet, to sell offered securities directly.

To the extent required, this prospectus may be amended or supplemented from time to time to describe a specific plan of distribution. The place and time of delivery for the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered are set forth in the accompanying prospectus supplement.

LEGAL MATTERS

Certain legal and tax matters in connection with the units will be passed upon by Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, San Francisco, California, as our counsel.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of TC PipeLines, LP and its subsidiaries as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2009, have been incorporated by reference herein, in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent chartered accountants, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The consolidated financial statements of Great Lakes Gas Transmission Limited Partnership as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2009, have been incorporated by reference herein, in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The financial statements of Northern Border Pipeline Company as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2009, have been incorporated by reference herein, in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The consolidated balance sheets of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. as of December 31, 2009 and 2008, have been incorporated by reference herein, in reliance upon the report of KPMG LLP, independent chartered accountants, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

PART II
INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

The following table sets forth the costs and expenses we will incur in connection with the offering of the securities being registered. All of the amounts are estimated.

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| SEC registration fee | \$ | (1) |
| Legal fees and expenses | \$ | 50,000 |
| Accounting fees and expenses | \$ | 20,000 |
| Printing expenses | \$ | 4,000 |
| Transfer Agent and Registrar fees and expenses | \$ | 15,000 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ | 11,000 |
| Total | \$ | 100,000 |

(1)

Deferred in accordance with Rule 456(b) and Rule 457(r) under the Securities Act.

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers***Indemnification of Directors and Officers***

Section 17-108 of the Delaware Revised Uniform Limited Partnership Act empowers a Delaware limited partnership to indemnify and hold harmless any partner or other person from and against all claims and demands whatsoever.

Section 7.7(a) of the Second Amended and Restated Agreement of Limited Partnership (the "Partnership Agreement") of TC PipeLines, LP provides that to the fullest extent permitted by law, all Indemnitees (as defined below) shall be indemnified and held harmless by the Partnership from and against any and all losses, claims, damages, liabilities (joint or several), expenses (including legal fees and expenses), judgments, fines, penalties, interest, settlements or other amounts arising from any and all claims, demands, actions, suits or proceedings, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, in which any Indemnitee may be involved, or is threatened to be involved, as a party or otherwise, by reason of its status as an Indemnitee; *provided*, that in each case the Indemnitee acted in good faith and in a manner that such Indemnitee reasonably believed to be in, or (in the case of a Person other than the General Partner) not opposed to, the best interests of the Partnership and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe its conduct was unlawful. The Partnership Agreement defines an Indemnitee as: (i) the General Partner, (ii) any Departing Partner (as defined in the Partnership Agreement), (iii) any Person who is or was an Affiliate (as defined in the Partnership Agreement) of the General Partner or any Departing Partner, (iv) any Person who is or was a member, partner, officer, director, employee, agent or trustee of the Partnership, any intermediate partnership and any majority owned subsidiary of such entity (each, a "Group Member"), the General Partner or any Departing Partner or any Affiliate of any Group Member, the General Partner or any Departing Partner, and (v) any Person who is or was serving at the request of the General Partner or any Departing Partner or any Affiliate of the General Partner or any Departing Partner as an officer, director, employee, member, partner, agent or trustee of another Person; provided, that a Person shall not be an Indemnitee by reason of providing, on a fee-for-services basis, trustee, fiduciary or custodial services.

Section 7.7(b) of the Partnership Agreement also states that to the fullest extent permitted by law, expenses (including legal fees and expenses) incurred by an Indemnitee who is indemnified pursuant to Section 7.7(a) in defending any claim, demand, action, suit or proceeding shall, from time to time, be advanced by the Partnership prior to the final disposition of such claim, demand, action, suit or

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

proceeding upon receipt by the Partnership of any undertaking by or on behalf of the Indemnitee to repay such amount if it shall be determined that the Indemnitee is not entitled to be indemnified as authorized by Section 7.7(a).

Section 7.7(g) of the Partnership Agreement states that an Indemnitee shall not be denied indemnification in whole or in part under Section 7.7 because the Indemnitee has an interest in the transaction with respect to which the indemnification applies if the transaction was otherwise permitted by the terms of the Partnership Agreement.

Section 7.8(a) of the Partnership Agreement provides that notwithstanding anything to the contrary set forth in the Partnership Agreement, no Indemnitee shall be liable for monetary damages to the Partnership, the limited partners of the Partnership, the assignees or any other Persons who have acquired securities of the Partnership, for losses sustained or liabilities incurred as a result of any act or omission if such Indemnitee acted in good faith.

Section 7.8(b) of the Partnership Agreement states that the General Partner, subject to its obligations and duties as General Partner set forth in Section 7.1(a) of the Partnership Agreement, may exercise any of the powers granted to it by the Partnership Agreement and perform any of the duties imposed upon it hereunder either directly or by or through its agents, and the General Partner shall not be responsible for any misconduct or negligence on the part of any such agent appointed by the General Partner in good faith.

Additionally, Section 7.8(c) provides that to the extent that, at law or in equity, an Indemnitee has duties (including fiduciary duties) and liabilities relating thereto to the Partnership or to the partners, the General Partner and any other Indemnitee acting in connection with the Partnership's business or affairs shall not be liable to the Partnership or to any partner for its good faith reliance on the provisions of the Partnership Agreement. The provisions of the Partnership Agreement, to the extent that they restrict or otherwise modify the duties and liabilities of an Indemnitee otherwise existing at law or in equity, are agreed by the partners to replace such other duties and liabilities of such Indemnitee.

Any underwriting agreement entered into in connection with the sale of the securities offered pursuant to this registration statement will provide for indemnification of officers and directors of the General Partner.

Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

(a) Exhibits

- *1.1 Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Common Units
- *1.2 Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Senior Debt
- *1.3 Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Subordinated Debt
- *1.4 Form of Sales Agreement
- 4.1 Form of certificate representing the Common Units of TC PipeLines, LP (filed as Exhibit A to Appendix A to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 333-69947) and incorporated by reference herein)
- 4.2 Form of Senior Indenture (filed as Exhibit 4.2 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-121537) and incorporated by reference herein)
- 4.3 Form of Subordinated Indenture Exhibit (filed as 4.3 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-121537) and incorporated by reference herein)

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

- 4.4 Certificate of Limited Partnership of TC PipeLines, LP (filed as Exhibit 3.2 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 333-69947) and incorporated by reference herein)
 - 4.5 Second Amended and Restated Agreement of Limited Partnership of TC PipeLines, LP dated July 1, 2009 (filed as Exhibit 3.1 to TC PipeLines' Form 8-K filed on July 1, 2009 and incorporated by reference herein)
 - **5.1 Opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP as to the legality of the securities registered hereby
 - **8.1 Opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP as to tax matters
 - **12.1 Computation of ratio of earnings to fixed charges
 - **23.1 Consent of KPMG LLP (TC PipeLines, LP and TC PipeLines GP, Inc.)
 - **23.2 Consent of KPMG LLP (Great Lakes Gas Transmission Limited Partnership and Northern Border Pipeline Company)
 - 23.3 Consents of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP (included in Exhibits 5.1 and 8.1)
 - **24.1 Power of Attorney
 - *25.1 Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility and Qualification related to the Senior Indenture and the Subordinated Indenture
-

*
To be filed by a post-effective amendment or as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K.

**
Filed herewith.

(b) Financial Statement Schedules

No financial statement schedules are included herein. All other schedules for which provision is made in the applicable accounting regulation of the Securities and Exchange Commission are not required under the related instructions, are inapplicable, or the information is included in the consolidated financial statements, and have therefore been omitted.

(c) Reports, Opinions, and Appraisals

The following reports, opinions, and appraisals are included herein: None

Item 17. Undertakings

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(a) to include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;

(b) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement;

(c) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Securities Exchange Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser:

(a) each prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(b) each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5), or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii), or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which that prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

(5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the registrant under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, the undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

(ii) any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned registrant;

(iii) the portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant; and

(iv) any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

(6) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(7) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the provisions described under Item 15 above, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

(8) For purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of this registration statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in a form of prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) or 497(h) under the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of this registration statement as of the time it was declared effective.

(9) For the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(10) To file an application for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the trustee to act under subsection (a) of Section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the Commission under Section 305(b)(2) of the Trust Indenture Act.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Calgary, Province of Alberta, Canada on April 21, 2010.

TC PIPELINES, LP

By: TC PIPELINES GP, INC., its General Partner

By: /s/ MARK A.P. ZIMMERMAN

Mark A.P. Zimmerman

President

II-6

Edgar Filing: TC PIPELINES LP - Form S-3ASR

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this registration statement has been signed below by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated below.

| Name | Title | Date |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| /s/ MARK A.P. ZIMMERMAN | President of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. (Principal Executive Officer) | April 21, 2010 |
| Mark A.P. Zimmerman | | |
| * ROBERT C. JACOBUCCI | Controller of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. (Principal Financial Officer and Principal Accounting Officer) | April 21, 2010 |
| Robert C. Jacobucci | | |
| Directors | | |
| * JAMES M. BAGGS | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| James Baggs | | |
| * STEVEN D. BECKER | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| Steven D. Becker | | |
| * KRISTINE L. DELKUS | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| Kristine L. Delkus | | |
| * GREGORY A. LOHNES | Chairman and Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| Gregory A. Lohnes | | |
| * DAVID L. MARSHALL | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| David L. Marshall | | |
| * WALENTIN (VAL) MIROSH | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| Walentin (Val) Mirosh | | |
| * JACK F. JENKINS-STARK | Director of TC PipeLines GP, Inc. | April 21, 2010 |
| Jack F. Jenkins-Stark | | |

*By: /s/ MARK A.P. ZIMMERMAN

 Mark A.P. Zimmerman
Attorney-in-Fact

EXHIBIT INDEX

| Exhibit Number | Description |
|-----------------------|--|
| *1.1 | Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Common Units |
| *1.2 | Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Senior Debt |
| *1.3 | Form of Underwriting Agreement related to Subordinated Debt |
| *1.4 | Form of Sales Agreement |
| 4.1 | Form of certificate representing the Common Units of TC PipeLines, LP (filed as Exhibit A to Appendix A to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 333-69947) and incorporated by reference herein) |
| 4.2 | Form of Senior Indenture (filed as Exhibit 4.2 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-121537) and incorporated by reference herein) |
| 4.3 | Form of Subordinated Indenture (filed as Exhibit 4.3 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-121537) and incorporated by reference herein) |
| 4.4 | Certificate of Limited Partnership of TC PipeLines, LP (filed as Exhibit 3.2 to TC PipeLines' Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 333-69947) and incorporated by reference herein) |
| 4.5 | Second Amended and Restated Agreement of Limited Partnership of TC PipeLines, LP dated July 1, 2009 (filed as Exhibit 3.1 to TC PipeLines' Form 8-K filed on July 1, 2009 and incorporated by reference herein) |
| **5.1 | Opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP as to the legality of the securities registered hereby |
| **8.1 | Opinion of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP as to tax matters |
| **12.1 | Computation of ratio of earnings to fixed charges |
| **23.1 | Consent of KPMG LLP (TC PipeLines, LP and TC PipeLines GP, Inc.) |
| **23.2 | Consent of KPMG LLP (Great Lakes Gas Transmission Limited Partnership and Northern Border Pipeline Company) |
| 23.3 | Consents of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP (included in Exhibits 5.1 and 8.1) |
| **24.1 | Power of Attorney |
| *25.1 | Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility and Qualification related to the Senior Indenture and the Subordinated Indenture |

*
To be filed by a post-effective amendment or as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K.

**
Filed herewith.

QuickLinks

[CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE](#)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS](#)

[WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION](#)

[CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS](#)

[ABOUT TC PIPELINES, LP](#)

[RISK FACTORS](#)

[USE OF PROCEEDS](#)

[RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF COMMON UNITS](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES](#)

[MATERIAL TAX CONSIDERATIONS](#)

[INVESTMENT IN TC PIPELINES, LP BY EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS](#)

[PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION](#)

[LEGAL MATTERS](#)

[EXPERTS](#)

[PART II INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS](#)

[Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution](#)

[Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers](#)

[Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules](#)

[Item 17. Undertakings](#)

[SIGNATURES](#)

[EXHIBIT INDEX](#)