



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday June 27, 2018

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Minnesota PUC greenlights more oil into Superior, putting Wisconsin at risk of another pipeline

Saint Paul, MN -- Today, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) voted to approve the Certificate of Need for Enbridge's proposed Line 3 tar sands pipeline, greenlighting more oil to flow into Superior, driving the need for another tar sands pipeline through Wisconsin. This will likely mean that Enbridge will start seeking permits in Wisconsin and getting easements and permission from the landowners and tribes for the new pipeline. The decision was deplored by community members across Wisconsin who care about the environment; our lakes and rivers; community and property rights; and safety. They vowed to work hard to stop another pipeline in Wisconsin.

"With any decision regarding the transportation of fracked or tar sand oils through our territories by any method, the time for addressing the compounding impacts of global warming and resulting climate changes are now. Never before have we experienced such impacts from the weather as we have experienced the last few years -- and it is bound to get worse. Never before have we had to respond to one oil pipeline or transportation accident issue after another like we have in the last few years - and corporations want to build and ship more? Now is the time to focus on changing the oldest of paradigms by embracing renewable energy and reducing our fossil fuel imprint. The future of mankind and how the earth functions may be dependent on that," stated **Paul DeMain, (Oneida/Ojibwe) and Board Chairman, Honor the Earth.**

Mark Borchardt, founder of landowner group, **80 Feet Is Enough!** vowed to use all available avenues to stop Enbridge from using eminent domain to take more private property for oil pipelines in Wisconsin. He stated, "The 5th amendment of the US Bill of Rights states eminent domain for taking private property is to be restricted to public projects for public use. Enbridge's abuse of eminent domain is government sanctioned theft for the private gain of Enbridge's investors. Property rights advocates across the US will not stand by and watch a Canadian company forcibly take Americans' land."

"This decision by the PUC puts all of Wisconsin at risk," said **Elizabeth Ward, with the Sierra Club-John Muir (Wisconsin) Chapter.** "This decision likely means that Enbridge, the company responsible for the catastrophic Kalamazoo River spill, will seek permission to put another massive pipeline through some of the state's most valuable resources like Lake Superior, the Namekagon, St Croix, Wisconsin, and Rock Rivers, and many other lakes and streams. The pipeline jeopardizes our waterways, the safety of our communities, our future, our tourism economy, and the Wisconsin we all know and love," concluded Ward.

"In reaching the Wisconsin border, this pipeline could open the door for Enbridge to force even more climate-busting tar sands to flow through Wisconsin, thus increasing the risk Enbridge already poses to our state's waterways, wildlife and agricultural livelihood," said **Mary Beth Elliott, tar sands team lead for 350-Madison.** "Here in Wisconsin, we plan to protect the environment and our livelihoods by standing up to this private foreign company and will use every tool at our disposal to prevent imposition of further Enbridge pipelines," she concluded.

"We're very disappointed by the approval by the Minnesota PUC of Line 3, which will put great pressure on Wisconsin and Illinois to permit construction of the proposed Line 61 'twin.' Along with the existing Line 61, this proposed pipeline will transport dirty tar sands oil through the Midwest and on to the Gulf for export. We object to the use of eminent domain for private gain, whether it's in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois or any other state. We will continue to organize landowners and other community members to oppose additional easements for private foreign pipeline companies. Landowners and community members suffer all the risk - loss of free access to one's property, loss of crop productivity, and danger from leaks and spills - while all the profits go to foreign extraction companies and a foreign pipeline company," stated **Deni Mathews, Board President, Save Our Illinois Land.**

Additional statements from environmental, indigenous rights, property rights, youth, and community groups:

"After the hundreds of hours of citizen and expert testimony against the Line 3 replacement, the position of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, and the recommendation of the judge, the PUC's decision is shocking. We know that this will result in Enbridge's long-denied plan for a Line 61 "twin" being unveiled. Landowners and concerned citizens in Wisconsin will redouble their organizing efforts to let the public and our elected leaders know the danger posed by any new Enbridge tar sands pipelines," said **Phyllis Hasbrouck, Project Leader for the Wisconsin Safe Energy (WiSE) Alliance.**

"Line 66 is an all risk, no reward pipeline for yesterday's energy. It doesn't make sense to endanger public safety and our rich natural heritage for an unnecessary pipeline that puts all the risk on some of our most sacred places in Wisconsin while exclusively rewarding a private foreign corporation. We cannot continue to extract what is considered to be the dirtiest source of energy," said **Kim Wright, director of Midwest Environmental Advocates.**

"The Minnesota PUC's decision to expand Enbridge's Line 3 is a slap in the face to tribal members and landowners and a betrayal of our children's future. This line will carry more than a million barrels of oil a day through Superior, Wisconsin, a town that has recently suffered a major refinery spill and explosion. The fossil fuel economy is the past. Renewables are our future," said **Jan Conley, with the Northern Protection Alliance** in Superior.

"We favor the development of renewable energy sources rather than the addition of more pipelines," said **Phil Sylla, President of the Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Alliance**, the group concerned about the addition of another tar sands pipeline crossing the Namekagon, St Croix, and Totogetic Rivers.

"The Commission's decision puts all of Wisconsin at risk. The safety, property rights, and agriculture of our community is now at risk of the Line 66 pipeline," said **Pam Kohl, Steering Committee member of Tri-County (Taylor, Clark, and Marathon) WiSE.**

"When we bought our property 20 years ago we knew an oil company had an 80-foot easement. But now we are hearing the Canadian company that owns the easement may want more of our land to put in more of their pipes. We don't want them to take any more of our land. We then learned that Governor Walker has given this 44 billion dollar foreign oil company the right of eminent domain, so they can take our land, whether we want them to or not. What about landowner rights for Wisconsin citizens? This is just wrong! We will work to protect our land," said **Kevin Stoddard of Columbia County WiSE.**

"The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission made the wrong choice by not listening to the people, not protecting the environment, and by letting corporations win with their decision today. The 5 chapters of the Midwest regional group Citizens Acting for Rail Safety have released a formal statement as to why we not only oppose new pipeline infrastructure, but particularly where it comes to the misleading arguments and propaganda that it will decrease oil-by-rail. Neither transport method is safe and both threaten the safety of local governments, citizens, water resources, and the environment, starting at the well heads and all along the pipeline and rail routes to the destination refineries and port facilities," said **Sarah Zarling, founder of the Citizens Acting for Rail Safety** chapter in Watertown, Wisconsin.

"We are disappointed in the decision of the MN PUC. These pipelines pose a significant safety risk to our communities. It's another obstacle our Wisconsin landowners must face and a blow to all citizens concerned about climate change. I

wish the PUC had come to a different conclusion on this matter,” said **Ronni Monroe, founder of Brave Wisconsin**, a group concerned about the safety impacts of the Line 61 corridor in Wisconsin.

“This decision puts all of the land and people in Minnesota and Wisconsin in danger. It is a disgrace to our water, people, land, and future generations. The fight is not over; the youth will continue to resist such injustice to the public well-being,” said **Jonathan Roberts, with Students Allied for a Green Earth**, a student group at UW-Whitewater, concerned about the pipeline near the campus.

“The State of Minnesota’s approval to allow the replacement of the toxic tar sand oil pipeline, Line 3, is disappointing. Still, the fight for the health of our planet is getting stronger every day as we continue to push for renewable energy sources. As Janesville continues to invest in sustainable development and the Riverfront Project, we will not allow *another* tar sands pipeline to threaten the river and community that we all care about,” said **Aaron Aegerter, with Rock County WISE**.

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