

EDITOR: I'd like to respectfully push back against the claim made earlier this month that Enbridge has an "exemplary record of environmental safety," as Chad Hendrickson claimed in his Dec. 8 letter to the editor.

Just over 10 years ago and a mere 400 miles away, Enbridge's line 6B burst and poured right into a creek that feeds the Kalamazoo River in one of North America's worst inland oil spills ever recorded. The Environmental Protection Agency estimated that over 1 million gallons of Canadian tar sands flowed into Talmadge Creek in the 17 hours it took for Enbridge to fully realize that something was wrong on its pipeline.

Enbridge said that the cleanup would cost \$5 million. Within two years, the cleanup expenses totaled \$765 million, and were up to \$1.21 billion by 2014. That's a pretty big budget miscalculation. It makes the \$1.1 million settlement En-

bridge recently had to pay to Wisconsin for breaking a variety of environmental laws look like peanuts.

This spring, Enbridge reported decreased profits and the need for mass layoffs due to a decreased flow of oil in the U.S. Mainline (or Lakehead) System. Increasingly, countries, states and corporations of all stripes and sizes are divesting from the fossil fuel industry. On Dec. 9, the state of New York joined the movement by promising to divest \$226 billion of pension funds out of the fossil fuel industry by 2040. The tide is turning. Even if Enbridge didn't have such a sloppy record, it may well be financially incapable of caring for us the way that they're promising us now.

Besides, don't the water and the land take much better care of us already? So much of the beauty and bounty in our lives is because of the thoughtful creativity and mindful relationships the 500 or so generations of people who've come before us have had with the lake and surrounding land. (We owe the most to the plants,

animals, and the water and soil who have been here all that time too.)

We would do well to remember that while plastic and petroleum products might make up a big part of our habits and needs right now, all of the lifeways that we use them for (whether it's fishing, travel, sharing food, creating art) are timeless in comparison to the past half century since plastic came into general use. There was a recent study about microplastics in coastal national parks. Of the 35 parks surveyed, the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore had the highest concentrations of microplastics. Is this the world we want to share with the upcoming generations?

I full-heartedly agree with Hendrickson that we can't be acting from a place of fear. But as these past nine months have taught us, we can look something horribly scary and unknown in the eye and respond with an abundance of wisdom and care. We have everything it takes to live good, full lives with and for each other without another drop of synthetic crude oil flowing through our shared home.