

Melissa Onyango-Robshaw

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to ask that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) deny the Clean Water Act 401 application submitted by Enbridge Energy for the Line 3 Pipeline Replacement Project. This application should be denied because of the harmful impact their proposed construction methods would have on wetlands and waterways in the state, including important wild rice waters.

I oppose Enbridge's proposed Line 3 pipeline and do not believe it can be built without significant risk to our rivers, lakes, and streams. I urge the MPCA to choose the only option to truly protect our water resources and communities: don't let Enbridge build a new tar sands pipeline.

The proposed Line 3 expansion would threaten over 200 bodies of water with the risk of catastrophic oil spills, yet spill modeling to evaluate the risk excluded adequate modeling of the impact of a spill in the St. Louis estuary and did not include waters beyond Minnesota within the Lake Superior watershed -- water does not know state boundaries and neither would the impact of an oil spill.

Enbridge's application is deeply flawed and does not meet the company's burden to show that the project will not violate the Clean Water Act. Enbridge has not demonstrated that its proposed construction methods will safeguard the water quality at each waterbody and wetland the pipeline will cross, it wrongly assumes that most of the pipeline's impacts will be temporary, and it ignores important potential impacts to water quality, such as the harm caused by frac-outs from Horizontal Directional Drilling.

The pipeline not only poses a huge threat to Minnesota's pristine waterways, it also runs through some of the most pristine wild rice beds in the world--a direct assault on the cultural, subsistence, and economic staple of the Anishinaabeg people. The application does not address, study, or mitigate for significant impacts to wild rice (manoomin) that the construction of Line 3 at the preferred location would have. It would cause increased sedimentation, alter water levels due to construction-related dredging, and pose an unacceptable risk of destroying ecologically-sensitive manoomin in the event of a spill of highly sulfuric tar sands. The threats posed by the Line 3 project to the Anishinaabe manoomin beds cannot be overstated.

In addition, Line 3 would cause hundreds of billions of dollars in social costs related to climate change in just the first 30 years of operation. Enbridge has made no effort to study or assess how increasing global temperatures could increase the risks the Line 3 expansion poses to Minnesota's waterways or the impacts that a spill would have on precious water and cultural resources.

Simply put, Enbridge has failed to provide sufficient information to show that the Line 3 project could be built or operate in a way that would ensure the protection of Minnesota waters resources. Therefore, MPCA cannot possibly certify that Line 3 would comply with the state's water quality standards as Section 401 requires and the permit should be denied.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and swift action on this matter.