



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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March 20, 2015

The Honorable Judge Jeanne Cochran
Administrative Law Judge
600 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Comparative Environmental Review of the Proposed Minnesota Pipe Line
Reliability Project and the Alternatives Identified in the Certificate of Need
Application
Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: PL-5/CN-14-320
Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number: 68-2500-31889

Dear Judge Cochran:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Comparative Environmental Review of the Proposed Minnesota Pipe Line Reliability Project and the Alternatives Identified in the Certificate of Need Application submitted by the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) unit in February 2015. The following comments are submitted regarding this document.

This report cites increased opportunities for accidents and spills as reason to dismiss more damaging alternatives. However, it does not acknowledge that the very increase in transport volume (from 165k to 350k) and additional pressure on the existing line would also increase environmental impacts in the event of a leak. The document did not include information on the existing conditions of the pipeline, including the age of the pipeline or recent testing for integrity during increased pressure and volume anticipated from this upgrade. Other topics that should have been discussed include spill prevention and spill response plans. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for spill containment at pump stations during a spill event should also have been addressed. Landscapes with karst geology are particularly vulnerable to groundwater contamination from oil leakages, and should also have been considered in this document.

Regarding pipeline integrity, the DNR has specific concerns for the existing condition of the pipeline at the Minnesota River crossing (Sibley & Scott Counties). The DNR would like to know what safeguards are in place for expedient shutoff response in the event of an oil spill.

The DNR has concerns for the siting of the proposed #4 Fish Trap pump station located in Morrison County. Although separated by existing roads from the surrounding land, this site is surrounded by many sensitive natural resource features including 1200 acres of Fish Trap Lake, Fish Trap Creek, Lake Alexander Woods Scientific and Natural Area, and School Trust Fund Lands managed by DNR Forestry. The large landscape complex of this area is classified as a Site of Moderate Biodiversity

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Significance, and contains a matrix of upland and lowland native plant communities, water basins, and wetlands. The DNR recommends that this pump station be re-located to a site that has fewer sensitive wetland and surface water natural resource features.

The DNR also has concerns for the #8 St. Patrick pump station located in Scott County. The pump station itself is to be located on lands already impacted by agricultural activities. However, the site is bounded by 800 acres Cedar Lake on the north and an unnamed stream on the south that is a tributary to Sand Creek, which flows north to the Minnesota River. We would like to know what safeguards are in place to protect these public waters in the event of a mishap at the pump station.

The DNR also has concerns about the impact to wildlife by noise produced by pump stations. In a study conducted by Clinton D. Francis, Nathan J. Kleist, Catherine P. Ortega, and Alexander Cruz, published by *The Royal Society Publishing*, and entitled "Noise pollution alters ecological services: enhanced pollination and disrupted seed dispersal" (DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2012.0230 Published 21 March 2012), it was shown that noise can affect wildlife and can have wider effects on ecosystems. The introduction of significant noise pollution to these systems has the potential to create additional impacts that are worthy of consideration, especially in forested systems such as those in Laporte.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Comparative Environmental Review for this project. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Frantz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Frantz
Planning Director
Environmental Review Unit
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Cc: David Birkholz, Department of Commerce (EERA)

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