

June 17, 2021

Secretary Deb Haaland
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Honorable Secretary Deb Haaland,

On the heels of a mass mobilization on June 7 to stop Enbridge's Line 3¹, we invite you to northern Minnesota to visit Indigenous leaders and learn more about the impacts of the Line 3 pipeline project within our nations and the federally protected resources of our beautiful territory.

These are the lands of wild rice, what we call 'manoomin', the lands of our ancestors and future generations. The Line 3 pipeline project poses a significant threat to water, Indigenous Treaty rights, and worsens the global climate crisis.

Line 3 is being constructed in Minnesota on Indigenous lands without consent from local tribes² and public officials³, and without a federal environmental review. The White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians wrote to President Biden informing him these sovereign nations do not consent to Line 3 and have enacted multiple resolutions opposing the project, and requesting President Biden respect Treaty rights.⁴ So far, President Biden and the Army Corps of Engineers haven't listened to our voices — we are hoping they will listen to yours.

Enbridge's new pipeline route crosses the 1854 and 1855 Treaty territories, where Anishinaabe people retain the right to hunt, fish, gather medicines, and harvest wild rice. The impact of construction — or worse, an oil spill — would permanently damage our people's ability to exercise these rights.

We also have deep concerns about the protection of religious freedom as well as the continuation of our water based and wild rice based way of life in our territory. Enbridge is violating the National Historic Preservation Act Sec.106 by the lack of an adequate review of Line 3, which is in a new route where we have thousands-year-old villages and ceremonial lodges; lodges which we continue to make and use on the Mississippi River, as we have since time immemorial.

¹ ["Treaty People Gathering Draws Thousands, Pledges for Summer of Action Against Enbridge Line 3,"](#) Native News Online

² ["Tribes Defend Minnesota Waterways From Dangerous Line 3 Pipeline: Representing the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, Honor the Earth, and Sierra Club, Earthjustice is fighting the pipeline in federal court,"](#) Earthjustice

³ ["Minnesota Dept of Commerce again appeals approval of Enbridge pipeline,"](#) Star Tribune

⁴ ["Red Lake and White Earth Letter to President Biden \(2.2.21\),"](#) White Earth Nation

One of our lodges sits on the banks of the Mississippi River. Our lodge predates Line 3, yet Enbridge placed a stake in it, and finally noted it as an “unanticipated discovery.” There’s been a “stop work order” to protect our lodge, but we have been threatened with arrest, and imminent destruction of our lodge. Where is the consultation? Who is protecting the religious freedom of the Anishinaabe? We are asking you as our trustee to help us have a voice that reflects sovereignty.

The Army Corps of Engineers must immediately reevaluate and suspend or revoke Enbridge’s Line 3 Clean Water Act Section 404 permit. The Army Corps failed to consider significant information on Line 3’s impacts in reaching its original determination, including the risks of oil spills, climate change effects, and consequences to Indigenous peoples. The Army Corps also refused to prepare a federal Environmental Impact Statement for Line 3, despite overwhelming evidence that the project would have significant impacts.

The new Line 3 route will run from the tar sands of Alberta, Canada, to the shores of Lake Superior, crossing 227 lakes and rivers, including the headwaters of the Mississippi River and rivers that feed directly into Lake Superior, putting all those waterways at imminent risk of a spill from the 760,000 barrels of tar sands oil that would flow daily.

Climate scientists warn that we must keep the vast majority of known fossil fuels reserves in the ground and drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 to achieve international climate goals.⁵ Line 3 would release emissions equivalent to building 50 new coal plants, costing society more than \$287 billion in climate impacts in just its first 30 years of operation.⁶ Line 3 will increase tar sands export by 370,000 barrels per day.⁷ In the most severe drought we have seen in this time, Enbridge plans to take 630 million gallons of water from the fish and the wild rice. All of this puts our pristine ecosystems on the verge of collapse, with significant impacts on federally protected areas including major waterfowl production areas, and forested areas.

Line 3 not only threatens local ecosystems and wildlife but also puts Indigenous and local communities at higher risk of environmental pollution, oil spills, and physical and sexual violence. It is well documented that 'man camps' set up along the pipeline route are directly linked with increased rates of drug use, sex trafficking and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Already this year, two Line 3 pipeline workers in Itasca County, Minnesota were arrested and charged with human trafficking, and specifically, solicitation of a minor.⁸

⁵ “[Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C](#),” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; [The Paris Agreement](#), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

⁶ “[A Giant Step Backward: Carbon Impact of the Line 3 Pipeline](#),” MN350

⁷ “[Canada’s oil sands industry is taking a big hit](#),” Yale Climate Connections

⁸ “[2 arrests in human trafficking sting were Line 3 workers](#),” Duluth News Tribune

Indigenous leaders continue to take action on the ground to halt Line 3, while ongoing legal processes take place.⁹ None of us want further harms or mass arrests for communities on the ground protecting water, the global climate, and Indigenous lands. There have been over 500 arrests since construction began in December. Old and young, Indigenous and allied, church and religious people of all walks are engaging in non-violent civil disobedience to stop the pipeline. We do not want to see an escalation of militarized force against water protectors.

This past week, we saw the use of a Department of Homeland Security Border Patrol helicopter to “rotor wash” water protectors, kicking up sand and debris to intimidate.¹⁰ Why is the federal government coming in to further militarize the north, in a time when the George Floyd trial has just finished?

We greatly appreciate your consideration and hope that you will accept this invitation to visit our homelands. We would be honored to host you in our territories and share further about our Treaty rights, the violation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent now occurring, the importance of wild rice to our communities, and the impacts of Line 3. We look forward to hearing from you. Chi Miigwech.

Sincerely,

Tara Houska (Couchiching First Nation)
Giniw Collective

Winona LaDuke (White Earth Nation)
Honor the Earth

Simone Senogles (Red Lake Nation)
Indigenous Environmental Network
RISE Coalition

Taysha Martineau (The Fond Du Lac Band
of Lake Superior Chippewa)
Camp Migizi

Sasha Beaulieu (Red Lake Nation)
Red Lake Treaty Camp

Joye Braun (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)
Indigenous Environmental Network

⁹ [“Tribes Defend Minnesota Waterways From Dangerous Line 3 Pipeline: Representing the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, Honor the Earth, and Sierra Club. Earthjustice is fighting the pipeline in federal court,”](#) Earthjustice

¹⁰ [“Low-flying DHS Helicopter Showers Anti-pipeline Protests with Debris,”](#) The Intercept