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November 1, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Daniel P. Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

Re: ST. CLOUD PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of the Application of Enbridge Energy, Limited Partnership, for a Certificate of Need for the Line 3 Replacement Project in Minnesota From the North Dakota Border to the Wisconsin Border, OAH 65-2500-32764, MPUC PL-9/CN-14-916

In the Matter of the Application of Enbridge Energy, Limited Partnership for a Routing Permit for the Line 3 Replacement Project in Minnesota From the North Dakota Border to the Wisconsin Border, OAH 65-2500-33377 MPUC PL-9/PPL-15-137

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Please find attached a letter from my client, Sierra Club, regarding the Line 3 public hearing in St. Cloud.

Sincerely,
/s/ Leili Fatehi
Attorney for Sierra Club



SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER

North Star Chapter
2327 East Franklin Avenue, Suite 1
Minneapolis, MN 55406-4420

Daniel P. Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

November 1, 2017

Dear Mr. Wolf,

Our members have greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate fully in the Public Utilities Commission hearings on the proposed Line 3 here in Minnesota. As such, we were disappointed to hear on October 25th that the Public Utilities Commission cancelled the October 26th public hearing in St. Cloud Minnesota. The Commission's press release published on October 25th indicated that it was looking into rescheduling the hearing. Based on comments at the Prehearing Scheduling Conference we are deeply troubled at the apparent staff ambivalence regarding rescheduling a hearing in the St. Cloud area.

The St. Cloud public hearing was the last in a series, and we have heard from Minnesotans who were excited and had planned to take part in this public process at that announced hearing time, date, and location. Honor the Earth, an organization we work with, had secured a shuttle bus to help White Earth Tribal members and the local community attend the last public hearing and offer their testimony for the record. Additionally, the September 28 hearing in St. Paul had over 1,000 people in attendance, and for those who left before they had the opportunity to testify, it was reasonable for them to plan on attending a later hearing in St. Cloud to have a chance to participate in this public process. As a large population center in the state, residents in and around St. Cloud should have the opportunity to have their voices heard. To suggest that only residents along the current or proposed route have an interest in participating goes against what we know to be true through previous public comment periods and the St. Paul hearing, which drew more than 1,000 people. It also reflects a narrow view of what Minnesotans care about. Our waters are a public resource that we all rely on, and upholding treaty rights is of interest to many Minnesotans across the state and not dictated by the communities in which they reside.

While in-person oral testimony is not the only way to submit comment as a member of the public, it is an important method and it is the only time members of the public get to question Enbridge or state agencies on the record. Our state should not disregard the importance of this opportunity for the public.

It has been explained that the cancellation was at the request of the St. Cloud Convention Center. To allow the venue for a public meeting to dictate whether that public meeting will occur is absurd, and we are deeply concerned about the message this sends about the value of public input. To cancel and not reschedule because a venue determined that a certain date is inconvenient or because the venue has vague safety concerns due to other planned events communicates that the Commission does not intend to genuinely listen to the public and its concerns. Failing to reschedule a meeting cancelled at the last minute does not build public trust, and the Commission should do better than this.

We urge the Commission staff to find a St. Cloud venue and hold the last public hearing before the public comment period closes. Every interested Minnesotan deserves to have their voice heard in this process and it is the duty of state agencies to ensure that they have that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Margaret Levin
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter