



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

*Executive Branch of Tribal Government
Office of the Chief Executive*

Virgil Wind, Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

April 16, 2026

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster Street
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921

Re: Letter of Support — Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa / Enbridge Line 5 Reroute

Dear Secretary and Staff of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:

I write to you on behalf of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in strong and unequivocal support of our relatives, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, in their ongoing legal and regulatory efforts to ensure that Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline reroute is moved away from the Bad River Indian Reservation and the *nibi* and wetlands that sustain our shared Ojibwe way of life.

The Mille Lacs Band and the Bad River Band are united by shared ancestry, treaty rights, and a sacred responsibility to protect the *aki* (land) and the *nibi* (water) entrusted to our peoples since time immemorial. What threatens Bad River threatens all Anishinaabe people. We are one people, and we stand together.

We are deeply troubled by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' decision to approve Enbridge's permit for the Line 5 reroute in its current form. As you know, the proposed 41-mile reroute would run just outside the boundaries of the Bad River Reservation, crossing at least 186 waterways and 101 acres of high-quality, previously undisturbed wetlands. This reroute would, in effect, encircle the Reservation on three sides, with Lake Superior — the greatest freshwater lake in the world — forming the fourth. Any contamination introduced into these *nibi* during construction or as the result of a pipeline spill would flow directly through the Bad River watershed and into Lake Superior.

Letter from Chief Executive Virgil Wind to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Re: Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Letter of Support — Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa /
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We are also concerned about the construction methods proposed by Enbridge, including trenching, Horizontal Direct Drilling, and blasting of the Penokee mountainside. Each of these techniques carries documented risks of nibi contamination and habitat destruction. Safer alternative reroute options — options that would move the pipeline out of the Bad River watershed and further from Lake Superior — exist and have been identified. We call upon the WDNR to require Enbridge to pursue those alternatives.

The Bad River Band is challenging the WDNR's approval of this permit in Circuit Court, and separately challenging the Army Corps of Engineers' approval at the federal level. The Mille Lacs Band fully supports those legal efforts. We respectfully urge the WDNR to take this opportunity to reconsider its approval, to apply its own environmental mission in good faith, and to require Enbridge to adopt a reroute that genuinely protects the Bad River watershed, Lake Superior, and the tribal nations whose homelands and treaty rights depend upon clean nibi.

Our elders teach us that bemaadizid nibi — water is life. The decisions made today about this pipeline will echo for generations. We ask that you act with that truth in mind.

Miigwech,



Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

cc:

Elizabeth Arbuckle, Ph.D., Chairwoman, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Naomi Tillison, Natural Resources Director, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of Natural Resources, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Susan Klapel, Executive Director of Natural Resources, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Perry Bunting, Director of Environmental Programs, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe