



MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE

Executive Branch of Tribal Government

STATEMENT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE MELANIE BENJAMIN RE: PROPOSED TAMARACK NICEL MINE

Released October 18, 2022

Yesterday, the State of Minnesota announced that it has fined Enbridge nearly \$11 million for multiple violations of water quality regulations related to construction of the Line 3 pipeline that damaged and polluted the environment. Enbridge also faces criminal charges. Violations include:

- Discharging construction storm water into wetlands
- Releasing drilling mud into surface waters at 12 locations
- Puncturing 3 underground aquifers

Back in September 2021, Enbridge released a statement hailing the completion of its Line 3 pipeline. Here are statements Enbridge made about the pipeline at that time:

- “This is the most studied pipeline project in state history”
- This is a result of “exhaustive scientific review exceeding legal and regulatory requirements”
- And they said Line 3 “was developed and executed with the most state-of-the-art approach to design, construction and environmental management.”

Yet we now know that Enbridge repeatedly violated water quality regulations and requirements that damaged and polluted the environment during construction. All those commitments made by Enbridge about safety, state-of-the-art technology and environmental protection were just words - empty promises without meaning or commitment.

When the Mille Lacs Band learns of high-risk projects – like the nickel mine being proposed in Tamarack, Minnesota – history has taught us that we must carefully and skeptically scrutinize every commitment and promise made about safety assurances and environmental protection. With the areas of the proposed mine site just 1.3 miles from Band-owned lands, it is our duty to ensure our water, lands, resources and sacred manoomin are protected. The Mille Lacs Band has been hard at work doing just that. We are committed to holding both industry and the State of Minnesota accountable, because collecting fines for damage done to the environment after-the-fact is no victory.

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