

Presentation to Ontario Energy board re: Energy East Project

As a member of Kenora City Council, I am pleased to be here today for the opportunity to listen to the public's feedback on this initiative, together with the opportunity to provide the Ontario Energy Board with a municipal Councillor's perspective on the proposed conversion of one of the existing TransCanada pipeline's natural gas lines to crude oil.

The conversion issue should be approached from two perspectives:

1. What are the alternatives, and
2. Ensuring the protection of the natural environment

Kenora is immediately adjacent to CP lines. There is a full time population of approximately 15,000 people who live in our community along with several thousand more in immediate surrounding areas to Kenora. Over and above those numbers are the people who live in various First Nation Reserves and in townships without municipal organizations along the track.

Our citizens are exposed on a daily basis to the hundreds of rail cars carrying some form of fossil fuel beside their homes and businesses. As we all have seen in the last year, rail accidents involving a cargo of fossil fuel can have devastating result, with the potential for significant loss of life. As municipal leaders, it is our responsibility to do what we can to minimize the dangers to our citizens.

We have been advised that shipping crude oil by pipeline is a much safer way of transporting such a commodity than by rail car or truck. At the same time the current and increasing use of rail for this commodity, means that there is less capacity for the other essential commodities such as grain and forest products. In addition, the increased length in trains and the location of the train station in Kenora has resulted in longer traffic delays at railroad crossings. As a result our emergency services including fire, police and ambulance can no longer rely on these major and quickest routes.

It is for these reasons that we support the continued investigation and consultations related to the conversion of the natural gas line to transport crude oil.

TransCanada Pipelines that 100% of the existing natural gas pipeline is located below grade, or underground. We understand that the only above ground pipe will be within the pump station sites, valve station sites, metering facilities and tank facilities. We have been advised that situation significantly reduces the threat to the environment, either through the failure of the pipe or through external activities. Further investigation into the design of those stations to maximize the underground nature of the connection to the pipeline rather than automatically bringing the pipeline to the surface where an accident or breakage could more readily occur is warranted.

We are pleased to learn that TransCanada is committed to the following improvements

- TransCanada utilizes a state-of-the-art leak protection system which can isolate any section of pipe by remotely closing valves and shutting down pump stations.
- These valves will be installed on both sides of significant water crossings to immediately isolate the section of pipe in the unlikely event of a leak.
- This system and the highly trained staff that monitor it 24 hours a day will ensure that the pipeline will be shut down at the first sign of potential problem.
- Frequent visual inspections of the pipeline route will be made by TransCanada personnel
- Aerial inspections will be undertaken by Trans Canada and the industry

The City of Kenora believes that these aforementioned improvements need verification as the planning and implementation process proceeds. We encourage the OEB to recommend to the National Energy Board key strategies for the confirmation and monitoring of these commitments by TransCanada Pipelines.

In addition, we ask that you recommend that, irrespective of the role of the National Energy Board, TransCanada Pipeline conduct a consultation with all the communities in the Northwest to assist them in defining what they mean by a “significant water crossing”. This will help ensure that when they do seek final approval from the National Energy Board, it is done with a comfort level in the Northwest.

Finally, it is imperative that TransCanada Pipeline be required to ensure that all staff involved in the monitoring of the actual line have toured the line by air and land so they can fully comprehend the neighbourhood through which the pipeline travels. Detailed water flow information should be incorporated into all of the monitoring equipment so that in the event of a spill, and even with the quick cut-off at a particular crossing, the implications and the response can be quickly identified and implemented.