

## ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REGARDING TRANS CANADA ENERGY EAST PROPOSAL

Response from North Bay Presbytery United Church of Canada

### Who Are We?

My name is Rev Elizabeth Frazer and I am speaking to you this evening on behalf of North Bay Presbytery which is a regional body within the structure of the United Church of Canada, Canada's largest Protestant denomination. We are 23 congregations within the boundaries of our Presbytery representing 2100 households. At a meeting held in November 2013 in North Bay our members, many who live along the pipeline route, voted to accept the invitation of the Ontario Energy Board to comment on the Trans Canada Energy Easy pipeline proposal:

*“to voice our concerns specifically pointing to the risks to our local watershed and the eco-systems that sustain life locally and globally.”*

This submission is grounded in the values we uphold in our common life as a people of faith:

we believe we live in God's world and we are called to seek justice and live with respect in creation” (UCC- A New Creed)

We believe it is important for faith communities to engage in this conversation. Thank you for the opportunity to do so this evening.

### How then shall we live?

To begin, my response to the two OEB focus questions to guide our conversation are grounded in two underlying values, first that the world is sacred and secondly all of life is of value to be treated with respect. It begs the question...how then shall we live?

The first OEB question asks for comments about local and provincial impacts of the Trans Canada Energy East Proposal:

### We would propose to the Ontario Minister of Energy

that locally Trans Canada Energy East proposal poses a intolerable threat to the source of our community's drinking water, both surface and groundwater as it passes through the Trout Lake watershed. If this project is approved North Bay and outlying areas will live with a daily, hourly threat of source water contamination. No amount of proposed remediation, promises of safety procedures from Trans Canada can remove completely an intolerable and ongoing threat to a community of 54 thousand plus people. No amount of promised financial benefit can compensate for the possibility of a ruined water supply. Ruin our water and you ruin our city! The stewardship and care of water, sustainer of life, is our responsibility as citizens, as human beings for this and future generations. The issue of overlapping jurisdictions (Federal –pipeline...Provincial and Municipal – source water protection) must be resolved along with the questions are we willing to sacrifice water for oil? Or land for oil? Or clean environment for oil? These are the questions

before us now...locally and globally. We ignore them at our peril. which leads to our second concern.

**We would propose to the Ontario Minister of Energy**

**that** the regulatory approval process for this and other pipeline proposals in Canada is flawed and unjust. While the mandate of the National Energy Board states its purpose is to make decisions in the “Canadian public interest” the recent legislative changes in Bill C-38 that restrict who is allowed to participate in this important regulatory body removes Canadian public trust or confidence in the NEB decisions. The erosion in our democratic decision making process especially in matters that have such huge consequences need to be extensive in order to consider the wide implications of the outcomes. Restrictions on who has “expertise” does not serve the public interest in the long term when the consequences of these decisions are born by every citizen in every province in Canada.

Also the restriction not to include the upstream and downstream consequences of this and other pipeline proposals in the regulatory approval process removes **the** critical conversation of our time...the effects of unlimited fossil fuel extraction and use against the present and unfolding consequences of global warming and climate change. This is simply unacceptable given the overwhelming evidence that we need to be talking about and addressing these issues. Again we are ignoring this at our peril and leaving a legacy of destruction for future generations.

We leave it to others to bring forward the technical concerns of this mammoth proposal. I will simply conclude with this quote that I find compelling: ”The only thing we have to do to be sure we will leave a ruined world for our children and our grandchildren is to do exactly what we are doing now.” ( James Gustave Speth – Former Dean of Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies) We pray daily that not be so.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

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