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NATIONAL INDIAN COUNCIL ON AGING

Resolution #2016 – 07

TITLE: NICOA Elders Support Michigan Pipeline Shutdown

WHEREAS, we the members of the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. (NICOA) of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the issues and needs of American Indian and Alaska Native Elders, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of our Elders, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, NICOA was established in 1976 by Tribal Leaders to advocate for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Elders; and

WHEREAS, Line 5 is a set of twin, 62-year old pipelines owned by Enbridge that carry light crude oil and natural gas under the Straits of Mackinac; and

WHEREAS, the currents in the Straits of Mackinac at peak volumetric transport can be more than 10 times greater than the flow of Niagara Falls and switch bi-directionally from east to west every few days, and according to a 2014 University of Michigan study are the “worst possible place” for an oil spill in the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, the Great lakes contain 20 percent of the world’s fresh available, surface water and are a drinking water source for over 35 million people; and

WHEREAS, the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc. Elders, and as such, by culture, history, and traditions are bound by teachings, pre-dating the statehood of Michigan, to protect and preserve Mother Earth and its resources for the seven generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Enbridge has a shaky track record that includes 1,244 reportable spills, leaks and releases from 1996 to 2013; and

WHEREAS, Enbridge was in violation for their spacing requirements of its 1953 easement for Line 5 in 2014 and were responsible for a pinhole leak in a section of the pipeline north of the Straits in December 2014; and

WHEREAS, Enbridge was responsible for one of the worst and most expensive oil spills in US history when Line 6b ruptured near Kalamazoo in 2010 allowing almost 1 million gallons of tar sands oil to leak for 17 hours before shutting down the line; the national Transportation Safety Board investigators concluded that the blasé attitude leading to Enbridge’s safety violations arose from a “culture of deviance”; and

WHEREAS, corrosion is the number one reason that pipelines fail; and

WHEREAS, Line 5 was built before the Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act was adopted so it didn’t have to obtain a permit and ensure that the pipeline wouldn’t pose a threat to the waters or the public’s use of the waters; and

WHEREAS, Michigan’s Attorney General Bill Schuette has stated (in regards to Line 5) that the “pipeline wouldn’t be built today” and “the pipelines’ days are numbered”; and

WHEREAS, there is no plan for how to recover oil if there was a leak during the winter when the lakes are covered with ice; and

WHEREAS, protection of Michigan’s water supplies and resources is better accomplished by prevention of contamination and environmental degradation, rather than attempting to clean up contamination and restore degraded environments after the fact.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, NICOA Elders supports stopping the transportation of oil under the Great lakes; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NICOA Elders support the shutdown of Line 5 and the flow of oil under the Great Lakes.

AND ALSO BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the policy of NICOA until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above resolution was passed before a duly called meeting of the National Indian Council on Aging membership on 14, September, 2016, in Niagara Falls, NY, at which a quorum was present.



Chairman