

United Tribes of Michigan

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Frank Ettawageshik, Executive Director

RESOLUTION # 044 10-26-2016

United Tribes of Michigan Opposes Continued Operation of Unsafe Pipelines That Endanger Tribal Lands and Resources

WHEREAS, the membership of United Tribes of Michigan (UTM) is open to all of the twelve federally recognized tribes located in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the organization provides a forum for the Tribes in Michigan to address issues of common concern and is committed to join forces to advance, protect, preserve and enhance the mutual interests, treaty rights, sovereignty, and cultural way of life of the sovereign Indian Tribes of Michigan throughout the next seven generations; and

WHEREAS, UTM accepts the mission to engage, as a matter of mutual concern, issues that impact the health, security, safety, and general welfare of Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, the inherent rights and responsibilities of tribal nations as acknowledged in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples include protecting our citizens and resources from harm as we strive to live in harmony; and

WHEREAS, millions of people, animals, fish, plants, and other forms of life depend on water to survive and, in our native traditions, we are charged with sacred duties to respect and live in harmony with all of creation; and

WHEREAS, tribal and other economies of these regions depend on industry, agriculture, and tourism, all of which would be negatively affected by the waters contaminated from a petroleum spill; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes in the United States Midwest Region represent over 20% of the surface fresh water in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes ecosystem has a profound effect on regional and global weather, and protecting these waters is both a sacred duty and a practical necessity; and

WHEREAS, nearly 64 years ago, a dual pipeline operated by Enbridge, commonly known as Line 5, was placed to carry petroleum products under the Straits of Mackinac that connects Lakes Michigan and Lake Huron; and

WHEREAS, although this aged pipeline has not had a spill at the Straits, Enbridge

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pipelines of a similar age have ruptured and caused extensive environmental damages, specifically on the Kalamazoo River in southern Michigan (Line 6); and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that a petroleum spill at the Straits would be catastrophic for the health and economies of the entire region. Because of strong currents in the Straits, these studies have shown that in a matter of hours both Lake Michigan and Northern Lake Huron would be affected. Cleaning up such a spill is also subject to unknowns such as lack of knowing how to deal with spills in fresh water and how to deal with a spill under ice covered winter waters; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies such as EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Coast Guard have testified that the current resources available are insufficient to deal with a spill from Line 5 in the Straits under good conditions, let alone in winter or bad weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Attorney General has said that if this pipeline were to be proposed today, it would not be able to get necessary permits. A large diverse group of local governments and organizations have joined in a growing chorus of voices calling for Line 5 to be shut down due to peril in which it puts the Great Lakes water resources; and

WHEREAS, a number of these aging pipelines traverse Indian Country, crossing through tribal lands, historic homelands, and area containing significant treaty and trust natural resources we depend on for traditional, cultural and economic uses.

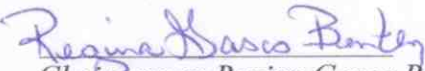
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that United Tribes of Michigan strongly opposes the continued operation of the pipeline systems like the Enbridge Line 5, particularly the section that lies under the Straits of Mackinac, which endanger tribal lands and resources; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this shall be the policy of the United Tribes of Michigan until rescinded or replaced by subsequent resolution.

Adopted by a vote of 9 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining, at a meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan held on October 26, 2016.



Chairman Aaron Payment
UTM President



Chairwoman Regina Gasco Bentley
UTM Secretary