

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Groups Urge Canadian Energy Board to Consider Tar Sands Pipeline Impacts on New England**

Washington, DC; Portland, ME; Burlington, VT – U.S. environmental groups formally asked Canada’s National Energy Board (NEB) last week to consider the impacts of a proposed tar sands oil pipeline on New England communities. The groups weighed in as the NEB closed public input last Thursday (March 21) on the first phase of its review of a tar sands oil pipeline project in Ontario and Quebec that connects to a New England pipeline. The groups expressed concern over potential tar sands oil spills in New England if the “Enbridge Line 9B Reversal and Line 9 Capacity Expansion Project” goes forward and tar sands oil transported east to Montreal ends up also in a connecting line, the Portland-Montreal Pipeline, which gives access to an Atlantic coast port. They asked the NEB to broaden the review’s limited scope and consider not only impacts on the Canadian side of the border, but also the impacts of a tar sands oil spill on New England communities and of tar sands production and use on the global climate.

Concern over the Enbridge Line 9 proposal under review by the NEB is heightened in the United States due to the fact that Line 9 currently operates in tandem with the Portland-Montreal Pipeline. Changes on Line 9, including transportation of tar sands oil, as requested in the proposal, would likely also affect the pipeline in the United States. Tar sands oil is an unconventional form of oil that bears greater safety risks and is more carbon-intensive than conventional oil.

“Proceeding with the Line 9 project opens the door to bringing tar sands oil through New England via the Portland-Montreal Pipeline,” said Danielle Droitsch of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), “and citizens throughout the region are rightfully concerned about increased risks to rivers, lakes and other important resources that a tar sands spill would pose, and the carbon impacts are simply unacceptable.”

The groups contend that if the aging Portland-Montreal pipeline begins to carry tar sands oil, it poses a direct threat to the drinking water, tourism economy and quality of life for numerous communities along the route. Effects of the 2010 tar sands oil spill into Michigan’s Kalamazoo river continue today, standing as the largest and most costly inland oil spill in American history (nearly a billion dollars in clean-up costs to date), due largely to the heavy nature of tar sands oil.

“The Portland-Montreal pipeline potentially impacts some of Vermont’s most treasured resources that support wildlife, recreation, and livelihood for many Vermonters, like the Connecticut River, Missisquoi River, and Victory State Forest,” said Jim Murphy of National Wildlife Federation. “The devastation that would be suffered in Vermont from a Kalamazoo type spill cannot be overstated.”

“A comprehensive review of the Enbridge Line 9 project needs to address the ultimate destination for these products and their cumulative risks and impacts” notes Carol Foss, New Hampshire Audubon’s Director of Conservation. “Rivers and wetlands are the most vulnerable locations for spills, and the pipeline it connects to in the U.S. makes more than 79 stream crossings in New Hampshire alone.”

The Natural Resources Defense Council, along with Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Environment Maine, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Sierra Club Maine, Vermont Natural Resources Council, 350.org, 350-Maine and 350-Vermont have also asked the NEB to consider the climate impacts of the Line 9 project. The groups point out that the U.S. State Department recently confirmed in its review of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline that tar sands is up to 19% more greenhouse gas intensive (on a well-to-wheels basis) than conventional oil.

“Rather than consider this project in little pieces, we’re calling for full consideration of the impacts of carrying tar sands oil on clean drinking water, air quality, and precious places along the entire length of the pipeline. New England has everything to lose and nothing to gain from this risky project, and we’re going to fight every step of the way to stop it,” said Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor.

The President and CEO of the Portland Pipe Line Corporation has stated repeatedly his interest in a new use for the pipeline, including transportation of tar sands oil. Additionally, numerous industry and Canadian governmental officials have visited or reached out to New England communities along the pipeline route to downplay risks associated with tar sands.

[The comment letter submitted to Canada’s National Energy Board by the groups in the U.S. Northeast may be accessed through the following link: <https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=938012&objAction=browse>.]

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