

Enbridge pipeline to cut through Six Nations unceded lands

By Donna Duric
Writer

A representative of Enbridge says it has consulted with Six Nations on its proposed Line 9 reversal, which cuts through the Haldimand Tract, but the Haudenosaunee Development Institute (HDI) says it has been left out of those consultations.

The National Energy Board recently approved the reversal of a crude oil pipeline that cuts through the Haldimand Tract near Cambridge and runs from Sarnia to Montreal. Hazel Hill, interim director of the HDI, says they received notice of the project last fall and sent the company information on its policies and procedures but never heard back from them.

An Enbridge spokesperson says the company is aware of the proposed Line 9 pipeline cuts through unceded Six

Nations territory and that it has consulted extensively with Six Nations political leaders.

"That's an important part of the project planning and development for any project along the right of way," said Graham White during a telephone interview last Tuesday. "We did engage (with Six Nations). We have to, but we also want to. We consulted with the (HDI) on behalf of the Confederacy Chiefs Council. The consultation, as far as we're concerned, will continue."

He said Enbridge has also been consulting with the Chippewas of the Thames and Oneida First Nations near London, Ont.

Hill says the HDI was never consulted on the project.

"There's been nothing. We sent them correspondence and we sent them the required application. We sent them correspondence to ad-

vice that they were infringing on our treaty rights and we haven't had anything from Enbridge. He's a liar. There's been no engagement with them."

The NEB has said they are satisfied that Enbridge has engaged aboriginal communities along the route, says White, but Enbridge wants to take it a step further and continue with the consultation process.

"We are committed to ongoing communications throughout the life of the project and after as requested and as appropriate."

To Enbridge, proper consultation entails doing what the regulator tells them and having face-to-face dialogue.

"To us, it's very much about having face-to-face meetings with aboriginal representatives in their communities. Also, we

have open houses and encourage them to attend those as much as possible. It's really as much engagement is required and appropriate for the regulators and the aboriginal communities."

If Six Nations says no to the project, Enbridge says it will encourage the community to approach regulators with its concerns so, "we can address those concerns through the proper channels."

He roughly estimates pipeline reversal construction will begin in late 2013 if the project goes forward as planned.

White insists the pipeline is safe.

"They're very safe. We transport 2.5 million barrels of oil and hydrocarbon products on a daily basis across North America with a more than 99.99 per cent success rate. Certainly we

do have events and they've received a tremendous amount of attention."

One of those events was a highly-publicized pipe rupture in 2010. The rupture, which went undetected for 17 hours, spilled more than 20,000 barrels of heavy crude into Michigan's Kalamazoo River. Enbridge was subsequently heavily criticized for its handling of the spill by the National Transportation Safety Board.

"Since then we have made tremendous improvement in all areas of our operations, including pipeline integrity, leak detection, monitoring, a new, upgraded control centre to monitor lines and our emergency response (system) has been greatly enhanced", says White.

But, just two weeks ago, Enbridge's Line 14 ruptured in Wisconsin, leaking more than 1,000 barrels of crude

oil into nearby fields. The line has since been shut-down and denied approval to restart by U.S. regulators.

Hill says the HDI and Confederacy will be reviewing the project in the near future and will follow up with Enbridge on the consultation issue, too.

The company's track record of spills is a concern to Hill. "That is a very big concern. Big corporations continue to draw the resources and take from the earth but they don't think about the impacts on the rest of the environment."

Turtle Island News attempted to reach Enbridge again to get clarification on its assertion it consulted with the HDI, but calls were not returned.

Band Council has not responded to requests from The Turtle Island News asking if Enbridge has consulted with them.