

SN Band council wants Enbridge to hold community update

By Donna Duric
Writer

Band Council is going to invite oil giant Enbridge to provide a community update on its controversial Line 9B pipeline reversal project.

Enbridge is proposing to reverse a section of the aging Line 9 pipeline between North Westover, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec to accommodate demand for access to western Canadian crude to supply the Quebec refining market.

Currently, the pipeline transports crude oil from overseas in a westbound direction. Enbridge wants to reverse the flow eastward in order to provide Quebec with crude oil

from the Alberta tarsands.

Elected Chief Bill Montour said council got a letter from the National Energy Board inviting them to participate in upcoming NEB hearings on the pipeline project. Council is also being offered funding to participate in the hearings.

"The concern I've got is this thing is over 40 years old," said Montour. "They're going to increase the pressure in this pipe rather substantially, so I'm a little concerned we're not getting the full answers."

Representatives from Enbridge's aboriginal affairs division held an initial meeting with band coun-

cil last month, where they insisted that the project is safe.

"I'm not really feeling warm and fuzzy about the safety of this line," said Montour. "And being that old, going from 240,000 bpd to 300,000 bpd, that's a lot more pressure. I think as a council we should be asking some more questions about this."

The existing pipeline currently flows underneath the Grand River near Kitchener.

"If there is a leak where it goes under the river it's going to be some hours before they can get there to either stem the flow or turn the darn thing off," said Montour. "It's going

to be quite a bit of leakage out of the pipe. We've got to get more involved in this. This is a direct threat to our community."

Councillor Lewis Staats said they need to get more information on the project, as well as the integrity of the 40-year-old pipeline.

"It's significantly old," he said. "It is steel pipe. As we know, steel pipes don't really last that long. They do have to have a certain amount of maintenance. We don't really have much history on that pipe at all. We've got no mappings that shows exactly where it goes. We don't have any maintenance information on that

pipeline and I believe that's something we should have."

Councillor Dave Hill said he is concerned Enbridge won't take Six Nations' concerns seriously and that they'll go ahead with the project regardless of what Six Nations says.

"They still have the legal obligation to consult and accommodate our interests," said Montour. "We have a lot more clout than the ordinary environmental organization, I would suggest."

Montour said because the company is planning to increase the amount of oil flowing through the pipeline, there will be increased pressure in the pipeline.

"You've got some huge pressures coming out of there. Over time, you'll have fatigue that gets in there and cracking and it blows up. There is a threat here, I think."

Montour asked council to direct Lands and Resources Director Lonny Bomberry to access the community consultation dollars in order to get a third-party assessment on the project and to hold a community information meeting on the project.

The deadline to apply to participate in the hearings is April 11, 2013. The oral portion of the hearing will take place in late summer 2013 at a location yet to be determined, according to the NEB Web site.