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MN350 Statement on Sandpiper Decision

MN350 applauds the Minnesota Court of Appeals' unanimous decision acknowledging the need for a complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Sandpiper crude oil pipeline Certificate of Need application. An EIS is required by the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act in the Sandpiper case, the court ruled. The court remanded the premature June 5th decision to grant a certificate of need to Enbridge back to Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Today's ruling sets a strong precedent for protection of Minnesota's water, climate, and communities.

Enbridge's Sandpiper pipeline proposal would establish a new crude oil pipeline corridor across much of northern Minnesota's most pristine lakes, and permeable soil.

"Today's decision is a victory for citizens and for our northern waters," said Andy Pearson, an organizer with MN350. "Conducting a full Environmental Impact Statement should be a basic step for every pipeline built or expanded in Minnesota, and the court's decision affirms that this should not be optional. Minnesotans want a fair process that respects land rights, indigenous rights, and environmental integrity, and a full EIS is an important step towards this process."

MN350 recognizes the significant work done by Friends of the Headwaters and the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy in appealing the granting of a Certificate of Need by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

"Scientists, political and religious leaders are increasingly highlighting the impacts of climate change, and society is recognizing and welcoming the need to move from fossil fuels to renewables. Protection of the environment, like our northern lakes, the Mississippi, and Lake Superior, is at least as important as the economics of new crude oil pipelines and pipeline upgrades. Decisions by the Commission need to be based firmly on Minnesota law, and today the Court of Appeals said this has not happened in the Sandpiper case," said Kathy Hollander, MN350 Tar Sands Team leader.