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Saint Paul, Minnesota - *Honor the Earth*, a Native-led environmental organization, has joined with a coalition of related organizations to protect Minnesota's wild rice stands. The group is participating in the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ("PUC") and administrative processes regarding two proposed oil pipelines threatening some of the most significant wild rice stands in the state. To advance those efforts, Winona LaDuke of *Honor the Earth* and her team of legal allies will train Minnesota environmental law students on April 17th. Hamline University School of Law will host the event from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm which will also be available statewide via webcast. Environmental law students from all four Minnesota law schools (University of Minnesota, William Mitchell, Hamline, and St. Thomas) will be reviewing the legal and administrative cases.

Honor the Earth has already intervened in the Alberta Clipper expansion case and the proposed Sandpiper line intended to carry fracked oil from North Dakota. Soon, *Honor the Earth* will intervene in the Line Three routing process. Winona LaDuke asserts that "all three pipelines are proposed by the Enbridge Corporation which has not bothered to include or consult with Native people or tribal governments."

Honor the Earth has taken legal action to slow the fast-track permit process to allow for consultation with the Anishinaabeg people, tribal governments, and a thorough environmental review process.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission held Public Hearings in Saint Paul for the Clipper route on April 4, 2014 and were met by many concerned citizens including representatives from Sierra Club, MN350 and *Honor the Earth* marching in the spring winter weather. All are very concerned about the PUC process and the exclusion of rural people, tribal communities, and tribal governments.

"Particularly concerning is the Sandpiper's proposed route as it travels through the watershed of the largest wild rice producing lake in Minnesota, a source of immense cultural and economic wealth to the White Earth Anishinaabeg. Pipelines leak. This leaves no margin for error. An oil leak from the Sandpiper in this ecologically sensitive and diverse region would cause permanent, irreversible damage to wild rice and the White Earth Anishinaabeg."
- Winona LaDuke

The PUC previously set April 4th as the deadline for submissions of alternative routes for the Sandpiper. This deadline followed a flash series of public information meetings in March during the middle of the week, often during the middle of the day. There have been no formal tribal meetings, and tribal leadership has requested that hearings should be held on the reservation. The routing hearings were held without the release of an exact route for the 610 mile pipeline, contributing to the concerns of northern residents who had been required to respond without an accurate map or meetings which would allow for their participation.

Honor the Earth filed a motion for an Alternative Sandpiper Route “29-94” suggesting that the alternative route “I-29 and I-94 Alternative Sandpiper Route mostly skirts the western and southern Chippewa ceded territories in Minnesota and keeps potential oil spills away from 1) the Red River to Hudson Bay, 2) the Headwaters of the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico and 3) the St Louis River and other tributaries to Lake Superior to the Atlantic Ocean.” This route would provide fracked oil directly to the Pine Bend Refinery in Rosemount, ensuring the oil would be refined in Minnesota.

Honor the Earth included a map of Minnesota to show the ceded territories for the 29-94 Alternative Route in the PUC filing, using the existing southern right-of-way corridor of Interstate 29 from Grand Forks to Interstate 94 from Fargo to St. Paul. *Honor* argues that “by using the Interstate right-of-way Corridor, many multiple uses and costs can be saved/shared as a symbiotic project in the existing or increased width of corridor, planned future uses like pipeline emergency response centers and management plans with regard to protecting the environment and accessibility of public safety equipment and personnel in the event of an oil spill or other related disasters.”

Interviews will be offered for the press at the event on Thursday, April 17 between 10:30 a.m. and 11:25 a.m. in Room 100, the Moot Court Room, Hamline University School of Law located on the Hamline University Campus on the West side of Pascal St. in between Englewood Ave. and Hewitt Ave.