



## United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
2019-CPA-0133 Belle  
Fourche Pipeline

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
North Dakota Ecological Services  
3425 Miriam Avenue  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-7926  
(701) 250-4481, [ndfieldoffice@fws.gov](mailto:ndfieldoffice@fws.gov)

June 27, 2019

Ms. Jaimee Antognazzi  
Operations Manager  
Keitu Engineers and Consultants, Inc.  
1403 27<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest  
Mandan, North Dakota 58554

Dear Ms. Antognazzi:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received a request on June 11, 2019, from Keitu Engineers and Consultants, Incorporated on behalf of Belle Fourche Pipeline Company requesting comments for a ND Public Service Commission (Commission) application. The application is for converting an existing 18-mile long, 6-inch crude oil gathering pipeline to a transmission line. There is no new construction associated with the project.

In general, the Service does not comment on projects that have already been constructed. For this project, it is difficult to assess possible environmental impacts because most of the construction took place decades ago without wildlife or habitat surveys done prior to completion. There is no clear resource or conservation benefit to further investigating the possible past impacts. The Service agrees that using the existing pipeline as an alternative to building a new pipeline will have less of an impact on wildlife because there will not be additional disturbance or habitat degradation.

Belle Fourche's parent company, True Companies, has a history of non-permitted discharges in western North Dakota and eastern Montana. In 2014, Black Hills Trucking, part of True Companies, was fined for illegal dumping of oilfield waste in western North Dakota. In January 2015, Bridger, also part of True Companies, had a pipeline release of 300-1200 barrels of crude oil into the Yellowstone River near Glendive, Montana. In December 2016, a Belle Fourche pipeline spilled an estimated 12,615 barrels or 529,830 gallons of crude oil and contaminated approximately five miles of Ash Coulee, a tributary of the Little Missouri in North Dakota. Based on these incidents, we encourage the Commission to require design and monitoring measures to prevent and mitigate potential spills from operation of the transmission line.

59 PU-18-404 Filed 07/24/2019 Pages: 2  
Late-filed Exhibits 8 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Correspondence  
Belle Fourche Pipeline Company  
Casey Furey, Crowley Fleck PLLP

The Service appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. Should you have any questions regarding these comments, please have your staff contact Jessica Johnson of my staff at (701) 355-8507 or at the letterhead address, or contact me at (615) 224-8693 ext. 224 or at 420 South Garfield Avenue, Pierre, South Dakota 57501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Larson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Field Supervisor  
North and South Dakota Field Offices

cc: Greg link, Division Chief, North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
Brian Kroshus, Commissioner, NDPSC  
Julie Fedorchak, Commissioner, NDPSC  
Randy Christmann, Commissioner, NDPSC