

May 5, 2022

Public Service Commission  
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 408  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

**Reference: Public Service Commission Case No. PU-21-48 (Bridger Pipeline LLC 16-inch Crude Oil Pipeline McKenzie/Golden Valley)**

Good morning Commission Chair Fedorchak and other members of the Public Service Commission. My name is Karl Rockeman, and I am the director of the Division of Water Quality within the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality. The Division of Water Quality protects and monitors the state's water resources to ensure the quality of surface and groundwater for the public's use.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional comment on the proposed Bridger Pipeline 16inch crude oil transmission line. Today I'd like to expand upon the comments already provided to the company in our letter of April 21, 2022 and included as part of Docket #28. For the record, I'm referring to the last part of item #4 in our letter that states "Proper surveillance and monitoring for early detection of leaks should be required." All pipelines should have adequate leak detection systems to allow for timely detection of leaks. In some cases, inadequate leak detection has resulted in significant losses of both oil and saltwater and subsequent environmental damage. Conversely, there have been other times when timely detection of leaks by the pipeline operator resulted in only small incidents.

The Department of Environmental Quality does not object to the construction of the line with appropriate oversight. However, we believe a thorough evaluation of the monitoring, leak detection and control room management of this line should be completed. Such an evaluation will ensure that operation of the pipeline reduces the potential for adverse environmental impacts.

The main basis for our concerns about the leak detection ability in this case is the 14,400-barrel spill from Belle Fourche's pipeline into Ash Coulee Creek first reported December 5, 2016. Although lessons can be learned from a review of any past incidents, this is particularly applicable as Belle Fourche is a sister company to Bridger Pipeline, and most importantly operates out of the same control room.

First, some background on the Ash Coulee spill. The pipeline carried crude oil from the Skunk Hill Station NW of Dickinson to Bicentennial station, collecting from multiple well sites in between. The leak occurred approx. 17 miles from Skunk Hill station due to a landslide.

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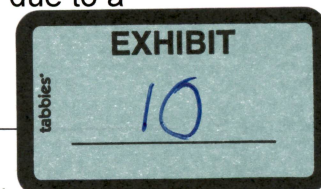
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**Exhibit 10 – NDDEQ Correspondence, May 5, 2022**

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

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Second, there were two conditions that caused incorrect data to be collected by the leak detection system: unmetered inputs injecting flow into the line and an out-of-calibration flow meter at Bicentennial station.

Finally, and most importantly, the controller did not recognize the short or take appropriate steps to investigate or take action, so the leak continued for three and a half days before the landowner identified the leak and the pipeline was shut down.

Staff from our agency responded to this spill that same day and continued to participate as part of the Incident Command, in cooperation with Belle Fourche and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Unified Incident Command directed the response and cleanup in the creek through June 2017. Oil is still being collected as it is discharged from the hillside, and Belle Fouché continues to clean up near the site of release under our oversight. Our enforcement action continues for the Ash Coulee spill, with a Complaint filed in federal court earlier this week.

Some of the issues discovered from the Ash Coulee spill may relate to this proposed line, as the two pipelines will share a common control room. The commission should review the adequacy of the following items by requiring a third-party audit for compliance with appropriate industry standards to include:

1. Collection of data from the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, including protocols to ensure its accuracy.
2. Calculation and presentation of the data to the pipeline controllers by the computational pipeline monitoring (CPM) system, including alarm management.
3. Written control room management procedures, including the operator's authority and responsibilities.
4. Processes for tracking and approving changes to the SCADA and CPM systems.
5. Training on CPM system and control room management procedures.

This audit should be conducted by an experienced third-party professional and should review current design, practices and procedures for compliance with current versions of API RP 1130 Computational Pipeline Monitoring for Liquids, API RP 1149 Pipeline Variable Uncertainties and their Effects on Leak Detectability.

Again, the Department of Environmental Quality thanks the Commission for this opportunity to provide comment, and I'd be happy to answer any questions

Karl Rockeman   
Director  
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North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality