

Over 50 water protectors in Minnesota march on pipeline construction site

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Two people locked themselves to an excavator -- and temporarily shut down work on the contested tar sands project

Minneapolis, February 4 (RHC)-- After three protesters were arrested on Monday at a Minnesota construction site for Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline, more than 50 water protectors on Tuesday marched onto

an easement -- with two people locking themselves to an excavator -- and temporarily shut down work on the contested tar sands project.

"The group, led by Anishinaabe warriors from Camp Migizi, then gathered at a sacred site, which has been desecrated by the pipeline's construction, to pray," according to a press statement from Line 3 Media Collective. "Our state laws are not working in the public interest and for the public good. We are endangering future generations... and that's got to stop," declared Charles King, one of the water protectors who locked himself to the construction equipment on Tuesday at an Enbridge worksite near Cloquet, Minnesota.

Two protestors were arrested Monday for blocking the entrance to a construction site while Jeff Nichols "climbed onto a section of the pipeline dangling over a trench," said the collective. "Jeff sat on the pipe for nearly five hours, preventing workers from putting the pipe onto frozen sand bags which would have damaged the structural integrity of the pipeline."

In a Facebook livestream from Camp Migizi, Jeff said: "It's not even a question. This one will leak. The sandbags are frozen. You guys have already received violations for that."

The Canadian company's efforts to replace an old oil pipeline with a larger one running from Alberta, through North Dakota and Minnesota, to Wisconsin have been met with fierce opposition from Indigenous and climate activists. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat, has been criticized for allowing the project to continue, especially after saying publicly in February of 2019 that projects like this one "don't just need a building permit to go forward, they also need a social permit."

The actions this week followed an open letter to Walz signed by over 250 opponents of the fossil fuel project. The letter ran on a full page of the Star Tribune and was backed by dozens of lawmakers as well as recording artists such as Bon Iver, Bonnie Raitt, and Pearl Jam; authors; faith leaders; and other community organizers pushing state officials "to stand firm against the Line 3 pipeline."

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