

PIPELINE 'RED TAPE'

In which normal people are painted as extremists

What a surprise: Three people who would have benefited from the Sandpiper pipeline are complaining about red tape in the regulation process in Minnesota (Opinion Exchange, Aug. 22). They trotted out arguments that have long been debunked. Like the one about the “need to move oil,” as if Bakken oil is piling up, waiting for pipelines, when it is already sufficiently being shipped via pipelines. Or the one about Enbridge’s “millions of tax dollars,” which are, in fact, dwarfed by revenue and sales taxes from Minnesota’s multibillion-dollar tourism industry (which would be threatened if Enbridge’s plan were approved). Or the one about “thousands of well-paying jobs,” which is verifiably untrue. Even Enbridge admits that there would be about 800 jobs — and that those would last a couple of years at best. (By the way, the renewable-energy sector offers plenty of blue-collar jobs, all over the state. Oil isn’t the only energy employer.)

If you were to meet one of the “anti-development extremists” that the writers want to “root out,” you’d find that it’s someone like your grandma, a favorite high school teacher or a conservation officer. We are just concerned citizens who want new pipeline routes to be carefully studied, not rubber-stamped as they have been in the past, before we all knew better. The system is working exactly as it should. Minnesota is justifiably taking a close look at a pipeline route that was drawn to benefit Enbridge alone.

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