

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) responses to common questions about the Line 3 Replacement Project and water use

The Minnesota DNR is aware of some concerns and confusion related to Enbridge's water permits for the Line 3 replacement project and the company's current construction activity. We currently have no indication that the company is operating in violation of any of its water appropriations permits, and we are monitoring compliance on an ongoing basis.

Below is additional information about some of the current misunderstandings we are hearing. Additional information and status updates regarding permits granted to Enbridge by DNR is [available on our webpage for the Line 3 project](#).

How can Enbridge continue with construction given drought-related restrictions on its water appropriations permits?

The Minnesota DNR has temporarily suspended surface water appropriations for some permittees in watersheds where flow conditions meet certain triggers. These suspensions include Enbridge's water appropriations for dust control, horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and hydrostatic line testing in some locations. Enbridge's surface water use is currently under suspension in the Crow Wing River, St. Louis River, Pine River, Mississippi River-Brainerd, Mississippi River-Grand Rapids, Clearwater River, Red Lake River and Lost River watersheds. A map showing the watersheds currently under suspension and the pipeline route is available on the Minnesota DNR's [Line 3 project webpage](#).

It is important to understand that the Minnesota DNR has not suspended Enbridge's HDD activity itself in these watersheds, or elsewhere, due to drought conditions. Much of the pipeline route traverses areas where water appropriations permits are not currently subject to suspension. Within the watersheds where Enbridge's surface water use has been suspended, the company may continue to conduct HDD activity if it is using stored water previously appropriated or obtains water from another appropriate and available source.

Minnesota DNR continues to monitor and manage the drought situation statewide in accordance with our drought management plan. We will temporarily suspend or modify additional appropriations as necessary.

Why is Enbridge being allowed to continue its trench dewatering in watersheds where its water permits have been suspended?

Minnesota DNR is aware of questions and concerns regarding a process called trench dewatering and an amended water appropriations permit granted to Enbridge for this process on June 4, 2021. This permit allows Enbridge to pump and temporarily store groundwater in order to keep construction trenches dry. The Minnesota DNR's water permit suspensions described above apply to surface waters, not groundwater. Groundwater permits are not generally suspended during a drought, unless there are specific concerns, such as impacts to associated surface waters or well interference issues.

By its nature, trench dewatering is only needed when groundwater accumulates in a construction trench. The water is stored, treated, and then returned to the area near the construction activity, where it seeps back into the ground and the water table. The dewatering activity occurs over a few days at any one location. Any localized impacts to natural resources due to the temporary lowering of the water table are short-term and minimal.

The Enbridge groundwater appropriations permit that was amended on June 4 allowed an increase in the volume of temporary dewatering from 510.5 million gallons to approximately 4.9 billion gallons. This volume is for the entirety of the pipeline route. Prior to granting the amendment, the Minnesota DNR evaluated the requested volume increase and determined it would not threaten groundwater sustainability or have other unacceptable natural resource impacts. To the extent current drought conditions are affecting the water table along portions of the pipeline route, the company's dewatering needs may be lower than anticipated (i.e., if the water table is lower due to drought, the company won't need to pump and store as much groundwater to keep excavation sites dry).

The Minnesota DNR continues to monitor the situation and will suspend or modify the amended construction dewatering permit if conditions make that necessary.