

## CANADA

# Pipelines ordered to cut gas flow near cities

## Canadian regulators order action over crude line rupture and series of spills

BY MIKE DE SOUZA

Safety concerns about potential ruptures along two major oil and gas routes prompted federal regulators to order the operators to reduce pressure on the pipelines traveling underground through some of the largest cities in western and central Canada, Postmedia News has learned.

The orders from the National Energy Board were never made public and came in the aftermath of a major Enbridge crude oil pipeline rupture and spill in Michigan last summer, as well as a series of leaks and spills in Quebec and Ontario along the route of a gasoline pipeline owned by Trans-

Northern Pipelines. The latter pipeline brings jet fuel to Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, as well as gasoline to service stations in Ottawa, Kingston and the Toronto area.

Enbridge's Line 6 pipeline, linking Griffith, Indiana to Sarnia, Ont., was shut down temporarily by American regulators last July following a rupture and spillage of more than three million litres of crude oil into the Kalamazoo River near Marshall, Michigan. Three months later, the National Energy Board, which was monitoring the U.S. investigation, quietly ordered a 20-per-cent pressure reduction on Enbridge's Line

2 Canadian pipeline, which links Edmonton to Superior, Wisconsin along sections that contained pre-1970s flash-welded pipe.

"The Board had noted a correlation between these sections and 'cracking related incidents' on Enbridge's Canadian system," said a federal report on October, released by Natural Resources Canada through access to information legislation.

"The Board has given Enbridge two months to provide an up-to-date integrity status report on cracking on its system; four months to re-analyse its cracking inspections, do integrity inspections and file an independent report."

The document, obtained by Ottawa researcher Ken Rubin, also said the Alberta-based company would be required to file short-term and

long-term integrity improvement plans and would not be allowed to increase the pressure in its system without permission from the board.

National Energy Board spokeswoman Carole Leger-Kubeczek confirmed that the order to reduce pressure was still in effect since the regulator had found that the company's "hazard identification practices" were not consistently reliable. She said that Enbridge would not be allowed to return to full operations until it demonstrated "the adequacy and effectiveness of its programs in preventing cracking incidents from occurring."

She said the information about the board's orders would have been made public to anyone who made a specific inquiry, but that it was not posted because the board did not have adequate resources

to publish these types of decisions on its website.

A spokeswoman for Enbridge noted that the company has spent nearly \$1 billion on "integrity management" since 2002, and has been co-operating with the National Energy Board to address their concerns with and respond "to all requests."

Gina Johnson, manager of communications for Enbridge Pipelines Inc., said the company was using advanced inspection tools to examine every segment of the line to search for cracks over the past five years, along with hundreds of "integrity digs" in specific locations thought to require "closer attention."

Al Conquergood, president and CEO of Trans-Northern Pipelines, said his sector was still relatively safe when compared with alternatives such

as trucking, but they needed to improve inspections.

"If it wasn't for our pipeline, there would be a tanker truck leaving Montreal, I think, every three minutes," he said. "For anybody in industry, it's usually a maintenance practice. If a pipeline has a rupture in it and you fail to detect that ... maybe it's because you weren't inspecting it often enough."

He said the Trans-Northern pipeline, which he estimated delivers about 50 to 60 per cent of the supply to gas stations in the Ontario markets it serves, is still operating at reduced capacity as it responds to the board's concerns. He added he doesn't believe the reductions were having any significant impact on the prices at the pumps.

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