

How will Energy East cross the Ottawa River? Citizens ask the Montreal Metropolitan Community to demand this essential information from the NEB before it declares the project complete.

Vaudreuil-Soulanges, June 1st 2016 – TransCanada doesn't know how nor where exactly its pipeline will cross the Ottawa River which is the source of drinking water for 2.5 million people living in and around Montreal. This is the conclusion of citizen group Citoyens au Courant, from the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region in Québec. The group found 23 water crossing feasibility studies in the 38 885 page consolidated application which TransCanada submitted to the National Energy Board for its controversial Energy East pipeline, but the study for the Ottawa River is still missing [1].

Despite this gaping hole in the proposal [2], the National Energy Board (NEB) has indicated several times that in mid-June, it will declare the proposal complete and thus kick start the approval process for the project, which they have 21 months to complete by law [3]. Citoyens au Courant (CaC) consider that the NEB cannot go ahead as indicated: without the missing study, citizens and their representatives will be prevented from properly participating in hearings, thus compromising the impartiality of the approval process. The missing river crossing study is critical for the Montreal Metropolitan Community (CMM) to be able to plan and prepare its participation in the process and best protect its citizens.

«How can our elected leaders and experts be expected to analyze the risks to our drinking water if they don't know how or where the pipeline will cross the Ottawa River?» asks Serge Dion of CaC.

In the detailed table of contents submitted to the NEB for approval by TransCanada on 26 February 2016, the company indicates that the feasibility study for the Ottawa River crossing will be submitted in the second trimester of 2016 [4, p.179]. If this is the case, the NEB should wait for this crucial document before declaring the project «complete» and starting the ticking clock for approval.

With this in mind, CaC have written to around 180 elected municipal leaders to share their concerns [5].

«We are asking the CMM to pass a resolution before 9th June, asking the NEB to force TransCanada to hand over all the relevant technical information about the Ottawa River crossing before launching the public hearings, which they will do as soon as they deem the proposal to be complete. This is fundamental to the credibility of the whole process» says Katherine Massam of CaC.

«The CMM has shown strong leadership on the Energy East proposal, and we are counting on our leaders to do everything in their power to make sure all participants in the hearings get fair and impartial treatment from the NEB, which is their right» concludes Christian Foisy, CaC spokesperson.

SOURCE : Les Citoyens au Courant

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- [1] Mike De Souza, National Observer, 20 May 2016, <http://bit.ly/TCDoNOTKnow>
- [2] PLACEHOLDER, Trenchless Crossing Feasibility Report - Rivière des Outaouais, <http://bit.ly/TCPlaceholder>
- [3] Preliminary calendar timeline for Energy East, NEB, <http://bit.ly/NEBCalendarEE>
- [4] Detailed table of content, TransCanada, <http://bit.ly/TocTcEE>
- [5] Letter to CMM, Citoyens au Courant, <http://bit.ly/LettreCMMOutaouais> (in French)