



117 South First Street • Montevideo, MN 56265

March 19, 2025

Chair Frentz
Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee
Re: S.F. 733

Chair Frentz and Committee Members,

CURE is a rurally based, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring resilient towns and landscapes by harnessing the power of the people who care about them. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of S.F. 733.

While pipelines last a long time, they don't last forever. At the end of their life, pipelines can either be removed or left in place, and each option has its own associated costs and benefits. For example, some landowners may prefer to have retired pipelines left in place to avoid the disruption of removal activities. Others may want the pipeline removed and the land restored to identify and remediate soil contamination, prevent future subsidence, or reduce risks to nearby water resources. S.F. 733 seeks to meet the needs of both by establishing a right for Minnesota landowners to choose between removal or abandonment-in-place.

Beyond these important landowner considerations, pipeline removal can also create jobs—including high-quality, union positions—and may even make pipeline materials available for recycling. And the abandonment plan proposed by the bill would ensure that prior to abandonment, pipeline operators have consulted with interested stakeholders, local governments, and Tribes, communicated essential information about their pipeline, and had their plan reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety.

Given the tens of thousands of miles of pipelines in Minnesota, it is important that landowners are empowered to decide what happens to their land when a pipeline company leaves. This bill would provide certainty and clarity for landowners and ensure that they would be informed about their ability to choose between removal and abandonment. This in turn allows landowners to make the choice that's best for them and their long-term plans for their property. For these reasons, CURE urges you to support S.F. 733.

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2025 Landowner Choice Bill

HF1073 / SF733

Current Minnesota law does not require a pipeline company to offer pipeline removal at end-of-life...

so landowners can be forced to take ownership of abandoned infrastructure they do not want. HF1073 / SF733 establishes a right for Minnesota landowners to have a decommissioned pipeline removed from their property and their land restored at the pipeline company's expense. The bill would apply to pipelines that require routing permits from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission as defined in Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 216G.02. Under the proposed law, a landowner could choose pipeline removal or abandonment-in-place on their property.

The legislation also establishes a requirement that no pipeline be abandoned without a pipeline abandonment plan approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety, with at least one public hearing on the plan and tribal consultation with any tribes whose treaty lands are impacted.



Background

In 2020 and 2021, the Canadian pipeline company Enbridge decommissioned a crude oil pipeline called Line 3 in northern Minnesota and rebuilt it in a different trench, naming the completed new pipeline Line 93. Throughout most of the regulatory process preceding construction, Enbridge refused to pay for or assist with removal of the old pipe, only proposing to offer landowners the option to leave it underground

on their property. In a last-minute concession to regulators at the Public Utilities Commission, the company announced a Landowner Choice Program which gave landowners the option to have the pipe removed by the company or to receive financial compensation in lieu of removal. As reported by Enbridge, about 95% of landowners opted to take the money and keep the pipe, while the rest opted for removal.

This bill would ensure that in Minnesota, landowners always have a choice about what happens with an abandoned pipeline on their property. Given the number of aging pipelines in Minnesota, this bill would create consistency for landowners and ensure they are informed about their right to choose removal or abandonment. By ensuring that the pipeline company would handle removal when chosen by a landowner, it would increase safety and create jobs for skilled union workers.

The bill is authored by Rep. Rick Hansen and Sen. Mary Kunesch.

2025 Landowner Choice Bill

HF1073 / SF733

Issues & Impacts



Landowner Rights

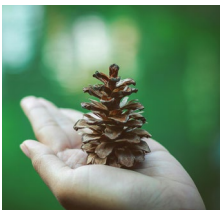
No one should get to leave their garbage on other people's property. If you make a mess, clean it up. This bill makes sure pipeline companies can't force private individuals to keep old, deteriorating pipelines on their land.

Landowners shouldn't have the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen to their land when a pipeline company leaves. With this bill, they'll be able to make the choice that's best for them and their long-term plans for their property.



Union Jobs & Worker Safety

As with any construction project, pipeline removal creates jobs across a variety of sectors, including high-paying union positions. Requiring the pipeline company to hire and manage this work ensures that the workers on the project have access to company information about what infrastructure exists underground and how to best remove it while minimizing risks and damage.



Environmental Concerns

Pipelines can last a long time, but they don't last forever. Depending on the specific site, removing an old pipeline and remediating the soil instead of abandoning it underground can pose less risk to water resources, prevent future cave-ins at the site, and make the pipeline materials available for recycling.



Precedent

Iowa law 479B already gives a private landowner the right to have an abandoned pipeline removed at the company's expense. Enbridge offered this program voluntarily in Minnesota in 2021 and declared it was "successfully implemented" in filings to the PUC. It is clear that pipeline removal can be done safely and reasonably, and that giving landowners the choice of how best to protect their land for future generations does not pose an undue burden to pipeline operators.



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