Bureau of Land Reclamation
Public Hearing on Environmental Impact on the Proposed Pipeline from Lake of the Woods

I would like to protest this meeting being held as there was not adequate announcement of the hearing and a total failure to announce that this was a hearing on the environmental impact of a pipeline designed to drain water from Lake of the Woods in a time of drought.

This is not one project that can be covered by one Envrionmental Impact Statement, but several very different projects with the same goal that each need through assessment. This EIS is ,in reality, a very Cursorary overview that is totally inadequate to truely assess the goals laid out in the objectives; that is to address the true impact on the areas in question. And It is clear that the study falls far short from addressing the true impact of a pipeline draining massive quantities of water from Lake of the Woods. Lake of the Woods in not a single ecosystem that can be treated as a source of water. It is a very diverse group of smaller ecosystems, fragile and vulnerable to incursion. The shore line ecosystems are very different from the sand/gravel bottom ecosystems and mud bottom ecosystems that are under the water. There are many unanswered questions in the Study. I will pose some of these questions, I do not expect immediate answers as that would consume too much time, but I do expect written answers to my questions with all due speed.

1.Given that a severe drought, possibly a 1000 year drought is coming, historical data on the Lake of the Woods levels must be accurately assessed for its drought cycles and to see its reactions to drought. This study, going back for at least 2000 years needs to be done to have accurate data on the effects of removing massive quanities of water during the drought. Will these studies be done?

2. The study fails to address the loss of the tidal pools, small bays and tidal and non-tidal marsh lands that surround the Lake, such as those between Springsteel Island and Elm point. It does not address the loss of these lands and their impact on wildlife and water purification on the Lake.We are faced with a loss of critical habitat along the shore lines that will not be replicated by the newly exposed receeding shore line.Whooping Cranes are a citizen of these areas. I have personally reported a pair of them on the Lake. Bald Eagles nest and feed along the lake shore. Shrinking habitat will effect their breeding and feeding areas. Many bait food and microscopic animals make these surrounding wet lands their homes. Are there any studies going to be done on the effects of draining down these wetlands. What is the impact of this draining down on fish production? Are you going to prevent a loss of habitat on the shoreline of the Lake? What if the Lake fails to regenerate in the spring and summer, will the pumping stop?

3. Most Lake of the Woods' Walleyes are lake spawned and depend on the gravel shelves that surround shorelines of the Lake and its islands for spawning grounds. The study wrongly concludes that habitat for the Walleye will increase. In fact the loss of spawn areas cannot be made up by lower Lake levels as in many cases the mud lines that abutt the spawning grounds are not places walleye can or will spawn. In the 1970's drought the Lake levels fell to where many sand and gravel bars were uncovered or had such shallow water levels that the spawn was affected. Given that conditions are likely to be worse than that and that the Lake will be forced to be artificially lowered even more, it is likely that many spawning areas will be

exposed to conditions totally unfavorable to the spawn and thereby have a dramatic effect on the fishing and lively hoods and recreational activities of most people of this area and many visitors. Where are the spawning ground studies? Why should you be allowed to proceed without adequate knowledge of the Lake and its very unique position as a non stocked, natural spawn lake?

4. There is expected to be a oxygen draw down caused by the pipeline. This is an unacceptable loss to a lake as shallow as Lake of the Woods. A oxygen depleted lake is a lake vulnerable to winter kill.We could easily see the Lake at historically low levels, perhaps as much as 7 feet down with the pumping. I have seen Ice that exceeded 6 feet in depth measured with a tape. These conditions would mean total loss of 13 feet of water from the average 30 feet level of the lake. This would leave water depths at a mere 17 feet on average. An artifically low water lever combined with an artificially low oxygen level with massive ice sheets, is a disaster waiting to happen. What means are going to be put in place to insure that the oxygen and water levels of the Lake are maintained at a level sufficent to prevent just such an occurance?

5. The intent to pump many billions of gallons of water from the lake carries with it the the intent to pump many many billions of microscopic and minuature creatures from the Lake. This will include fish fry, crayfish larva, may fly larva and many other feedstuffs that the bait fry, walleye fry and all the other fish need to survive and grow. Everybody knows that you can't have big fish without the little organisms that make up the food chain. What techniques are going to be used to prevent the fish fry, and feed stocks from being decimated from the Lake surrounding the suction inlet?

6. Artificially low water levels will cause artificially high pollutant toxcity concentrations in the Lake. Those of us who witnessed the horrendous alge blooms of the 1970s know that they can have severe effects on the oxygen content of the lake as they cause an oxygen crash when they die off. Disturbing the Lake bottom with pumping will stir up settled pollutants such as mercury and DDT which are laying in wait in the muddy sludge of the Lake. Lower lake levels will cause more lake turning in times of storms thus exposing more previously unexposed bottom and the contaminates it holds. Where is the data concerning this issue? What tests have been done on the Lake bottom and its structure and contents? What percentage of the various lake bottom types will be lost? What will be done to make sure that the pipeline does not affect our Lake through increase pollution concentrations and negitively impact the quality of life we enjoy here?

7. How will the noise pollution from the pumps and stations affect the fishing, wildlife and inhabitants of the Lake and surrounding area?

Respectfully submitted to the record; Patrick Fish, Box 172, Roosevelt, MN 56673
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