Canadian pipeline company Enbridge Inc. plans to almost double the capacity of its Alberta Clipper tar sands pipeline, to pump 800,000 barrels per day of one of the planet’s dirtiest sources of oil through North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. This expansion endangers our water, health, and climate, and puts federal, state, tribal, and private lands and waters, including the Great Lakes and Anishinaabe/Ojibwe ceded territories, at risk of devastating oil spills.

Tar sands are an extreme source of fuel, responsible for extreme environmental degradation and extreme carbon pollution. Capacity in an existing pipeline is increased by ratcheting up the pressure inside the pipeline, increasing the physical stress on the pipeline. Between 2010 and 2012, northern Midwestern pipelines transporting the greatest volumes of tar sands crude spilled 3.6 times as much crude per mile as the national average, and Enbridge has a disgraceful history of spills, including the worst onshore oil spill in U.S. history. The question is not if there will be spills along the route, but where, how often, how much, and how devastating. This expansion is not necessary: with declines in driving rates, increases in fuel efficiency and public transit ridership, and growth in electric vehicles and renewable energy sources, domestic demand for oil is declining.

If pipeline projects like Alberta Clipper are approved, increasing amounts of tar sands will be able to move through much of our domestic pipeline infrastructure for decades to come, much of it bound for export markets. Enbridge is already engaged in multiple pipeline projects in the Great Lakes Basin connected with Alberta Clipper, including a line that runs along the bottom of the Great Lakes and through the Straits of Mackinac; a rupture under the Straits would be unimaginably devastating. There is even a proposal to build a crude oil loading dock on Lake Superior that would allow as much as 13 million barrels per year of tar sands to be shipped across the lake, introducing a terrible risk to the region’s spiritual homeland.

The Alberta Clipper expansion opens the door to explosive development of the nearly 175 billion barrels of tar sands reserves, which if fully exploited would spell “game over” for the climate. Pipelines are key to this headlong rush to climate catastrophe, and this expansion project requires permission from the Obama administration and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Tribal governments and communities, environmental organizations, ranchers, farmers, and people across Canada and the United States are standing up in determined opposition to tar sands and to the transport infrastructure that would expand the tar sands industry. It is time to reject this dirty, dangerous fuel source and move toward a 100% clean energy future.