

# NEWS RELEASE



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## RESPECT MINNESOTA CALLS ON GROUPS PROTESTING LINE 3 TO STOP THREATENING WORKER SAFETY AND RESPECT THE RIGHT PEOPLE HAVE TO FEEL SAFE GOING TO WORK

Call For Civility Comes After Release of Photos Showing Damages Done  
By Protestors Who Recently Overran Line 3 Construction Site

**PARK RAPIDS, Minn.** – Respect Minnesota today called on groups actively involved in protest activities associated with projects like the Line 3 Replacement project to stop threatening workers and to stop trying to keep people from being able to safely go to work. The call for civility comes as the intensity of protests is increasing in Minnesota that is leading to situations where workers are facing more threats and hostilities as they work on projects. There have also been other situations where protestors have damaged and vandalized buildings and construction-related equipment, leading Respect Minnesota to call for more civil dialogue and action.

Respect Minnesota stands united with small businesses, communities, counties, chambers, and thousands of Minnesotans who have taken its pledge. While Respect Minnesota is founded on the principle that everyone has a right to free speech, the increased intensity of protest activity and the escalated behavior that recently took place was frightening, illegal and unsafe.

“I would like to commend the workers on Line 3 for the way they handled the disruption by the protestors in a professional manner,” said Joe Kramer, special pipeline representative for the [International Union of Operating Engineers](#) and one of the founding members of Respect Minnesota. “The Respect Minnesota pledge that each worker took during the on-boarding process proves that they are committed to respecting one another’s opinion and to treating all communities that have welcomed them equally with respect.”

Kramer said the events this week build on what has been an escalation of tactics by people and groups associated with the Line 3 Replacement project. Crews have experienced hostile actions, threats, and other efforts by protestors from around the country to attach themselves to construction equipment or physically put themselves in places that create safety risks.

“Based on what we saw this week, this would be an important opportunity for everyone on all sides of this issue – including protestors to take the pledge as well. It’s not enough to say it’s just a few in the bunch that are behaving badly. The responsibility for their actions also lies with those who called them

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to show up. Regardless of opinion or purpose, no one has the right to destroy property, intimidate workers or prevent them from earning a living.”

“Our community has taken the pledge and supports what Respect Minnesota represents because of the need for us and so many others to find a more civil way to deal with times when there is disagreement,” said Butch De La Hunt, president and CEO of the Park Rapids Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. “What is even more important for us is that the foundation of what Respect is about works on both sides of a conversation. Regardless of whether you are a supporter or an opponent of an issue or a project, being respectful of others and making sure you act in a respectful way yourself is something we believe is the right way for Minnesota to move forward.”

Kramer said that working on a pipeline project is dangerous work and is done by well-qualified and trained union workers. He said he was concerned that protestors are putting themselves and others in danger by just being on the right-of-way. Construction work in a tightly restricted area is difficult on any given day making safety a high priority. When there are protestors and other people on the right-of-way who don’t understand the work and equipment, it jeopardizes everyone’s safety.

“I have been involved with Respect Minnesota from its inception and am a firm believer in not only taking the pledge to be respectful but making every effort to live it,” Kramer said. “I would hope that our friends who oppose this work would be willing to stand by its tenets as well.”

Brownsville, Wis.-based Michels Corp. manages construction on behalf of Enbridge at the Two Inlets pump station that sustained significant damage.

“Keeping our employees safe is Michels’ first priority,” said Eric Justman, vice president of [Michels Facilities Construction](#). “Michels is thankful, commending our team for their safe, measured response in reaction to this week’s trespassing and the extensive vandalism of our equipment and workplace, committed by reckless and lawless protestors. These incidents risk entire families’ livelihoods. It’s important that all Line 3 Replacement team members are kept safe in their workplace so they can return home to their loved ones.”

Justman added, “Respect Minnesota was created as a reminder to pause and remember that we are all human beings and while we all have the right to lawfully voice our opinions, we equally have the right to expect enforcement of the rule of law and to feel safe and respected in our workplace.”

Respect Minnesota is centered on a pledge to honor and respect people and their opinions and to provide a safe environment for people’s freedom of speech and personal safety. Developed around the Line 3 Replacement and led by the union workforce who would ultimately work on the project, Respect Minnesota aims to spread a message of respect among workers, communities, residents, and visitors alike especially where there is a difference of opinion to find common ground and take a meaningful step toward respecting one another, our views, and our surroundings. Everyone is invited to take the pledge at [respectmn.org](#).

### About Respect Minnesota

Founded in 2019 during the planning and permitting process for the Line 3 Replacement project, Respect Minnesota is a pledge-driven initiative to create a broader community view by bringing people together to ensure that all citizens of Minnesota will be respected, especially around topics that generate strong opposing views. The tenets of the pledge focus on respect, inclusivity, freedom of speech, safety, and personal accountability. Everyone who lives, works, or visits Minnesota is invited to take the pledge. Learn more at [respectmn.org](#).

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