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CER Onshore Pipeline Regulations and Filing Manuals Review

Indigenous Engagement

Prepared for:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Prepared by:

Vertex Professional Services Ltd.

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Executive Summary

Vertex Professional Services Ltd. (Vertex) was engaged by Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN) for Indigenous engagement and the review of the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR) and Filing Manuals (FM). CER is seeking feedback for the Phase 2 review of the OPR and the Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment and Lands portions of the Filing Manuals. AFN organized and hosted a conference “The Lighting of the 8th Fire” from February 9th to 14th of 2025 (the conference), in the City of Sarnia in southwestern Ontario. Vertex participated in the Conference to provide support and technical expertise, delivered technical presentations on Air, Water, and Land, and facilitated the breakout room discussions on the CER OPR/FM topics. Vertex was actively involved in gathering the feedback from AFN. This report summarizes the feedback gathered from the conference.

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1 Introduction

Aamjiwnaang First Nation (AFN) has retained Vertex Professional Services Ltd. (Vertex) for Indigenous engagement and the review of the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR) and Filing Manuals (FM). CER is seeking feedback for the Phase 2 review of the OPR and the Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment and Lands portions of the Filing Manuals.

The OPR are the primary regulations CER uses to oversee pipelines in Canada, while the FM outlines the necessary components for an application for a potential project. Phase 2 of the OPR/FM review launched on June 17, 2024. This phase seeks to amend the OPR and FM to incorporate localized knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples, as well as Indigenous laws, policies, practices, and protocols. The CER is also focused on strengthening measures to prevent and address impacts on Indigenous rights and interests, including heritage resources and sites of Indigenous significance.

The Phase 2 engagement for the OPR and FM Review Project, the first since 1999, aims to enhance regulatory predictability and efficiency while ensuring that environmental, socio-economic, and Indigenous perspectives are integrated. The OPR outlines the main rules that CER-regulated companies must follow when designing, building, and operating pipelines, while the FM details what pipeline companies must include in their applications for potential projects. This engagement offers an opportunity for industry stakeholders, landowners, Indigenous communities, and other interested parties to contribute to regulatory improvements. The feedback gathered will help inform updates to the OPR, FM, and related guidance documents, ultimately enhancing safety, environmental protection, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

1.1 Project Background

AFN organized and hosted a conference “The Lighting of the 8th Fire” from February 9th to 14th of 2025 (the conference), in the City of Sarnia in southwestern Ontario. Vertex participated in the Conference to provide support and technical expertise, delivered technical presentations on Air, Water, and Land, and facilitated the breakout room discussions on the CER OPR/FM topics. Vertex was actively involved in gathering the feedback from AFN.

The Conference also combined elements of Environmental Justice, Western Science, Cultural teachings & Healing Ceremonies in harmony to create a path forward that could benefit all nations. Additionally, it created a platform for Indigenous communities to bring their voices to the table and to spread the knowledge of their culture and sacred lands.

1.2 Scope of Work

The scope of work for Vertex for this project includes:

- Support the Conference
- Engaging with Indigenous people to gather their feedback on their experiences on pipelines
- Review of all topics of OPR and FM
- Summarizing the findings and providing recommendations

2 Conference Presentation Vertex Topics

As part of Vertex’s role in supporting the conference, Vertex provided expert speakers to share technical insights on key environmental topics. Vertex specialists brought their expertise to the event, delivering presentations on remote sensing, the ongoing soil seed bank analysis project, and emissions management—each addressing critical aspects of environmental sustainability and Indigenous-led initiatives.

Dr. Dean MacKenzie, Vertex’s Vice President of Growth and Innovation, presented on the Soil Seed Bank Analysis project, an ongoing study in collaboration with Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Lambton College. This research, conducted at Maajiigin Gumig Greenhouse, focuses on identifying and preserving native plant species to support biodiversity and sustainable land restoration. By analyzing soil seed bank characteristics, the study provides valuable insights into ecological resilience and cultural preservation efforts.

Eduardo Loos, Manager of Earth Observation and Spatial Data Analysis at Vertex, presented on Remote Sensing and its role in environmental monitoring. His presentation highlighted how cutting-edge Earth observation technologies aid in vegetation monitoring, land use assessments, and reclamation efforts. By leveraging satellite imagery and spatial data, remote sensing enhances decision-making for industries, Indigenous communities, and environmental regulators, ensuring sustainable land management practices.

Cam Rollins, Director of Sustainability Services, discussed emissions management and air quality monitoring. His session outlined Vertex’s innovative approaches to tracking and mitigating industrial emissions. In collaboration with Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Vertex is actively monitoring ambient air quality in the region, with plans to expand these services to surrounding industries. This initiative supports community health and sustainability while fostering partnerships to improve environmental stewardship.

These presentations provided attendees with valuable knowledge and practical solutions, reinforcing the importance of technology, research, and collaboration in addressing environmental challenges.

3 CER Topic Papers for Discussion

The CER has released 13 technical topic papers to guide conversations through the second phase of engagement. These papers were used to facilitate discussions during the conference, allowing for the collection of feedback. The feedback gathered has been included in this report, which is being submitted to the CER on behalf of AFN to ensure their perspectives and concerns are communicated and considered in ongoing regulatory processes. The CER Topics Papers can be found in Appendix A.

4 Graphic Storytelling Artwork

Throughout the conference, an artist created graphic storytelling pieces that visually captured the key themes and discussions each day. These illustrations wove together storytelling, symbolism, and cultural elements, offering a creative and powerful reflection of the conversations. The visual narratives honored the voices shared, sparking deeper connection and understanding among attendees. This artwork can be found in Appendix B.