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VIA RESS AND EMAIL

Ritchie Murray
Acting Registrar
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
P.O. Box 2319
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ritchie Murray:

**Re: Enbridge Gas Inc. (Enbridge Gas)
Ontario Energy Board (OEB) File: EB-2025-0271
Washago Community Expansion Project (the Project)
Enbridge Gas Response to Wendat Nation Letter of Comment**

This is Enbridge Gas's response to the issues raised by Wendat Nation in its letter of comment to the OEB filed December 12, 2025 in the above-noted proceeding.

Enbridge Gas recognizes the importance Wendat Nation places on ensuring the protection of archaeological resources and is likewise concerned about mitigating any impact to such resources. Enbridge Gas is of the view that the approach it has taken with respect to the protection of archaeological resources adheres to the applicable requirements set out in the *Ontario Heritage Act, 1990* and the OEB's *Environmental Guidelines for the Location, Construction and Operation of Hydrocarbon Projects and Facilities in Ontario* (Environmental Guidelines), allows for early input from Indigenous communities and protects archaeological resources by avoiding unnecessary disruption of land through more invasive assessments.

Consistent with Wendat Nation's specific comments, Enbridge Gas will conduct additional Archaeological Assessments (AAs) for the Project as required and offer opportunities to Wendat Nation to participate in such AAs in a timely manner. Furthermore, Enbridge Gas confirms that an exemption from the requirement to obtain leave to construct (LTC) does not diminish Enbridge Gas's obligations in relation to AAs. For clarity, the Washago Community Expansion Project application to the OEB is not a LTC exemption application.

The information below describes Enbridge Gas's current approach to protecting archaeological resources and facilitating early engagement in the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

Archaeological Assessment Approach

During the EA, Enbridge Gas completes a Stage 1 AA on all potential route alternatives in accordance with the OEB's Environmental Guidelines and the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism's *Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists*. A Stage 1 AA identifies known archaeological resources, confirms areas with no remaining archaeological potential, and identifies areas where further assessment may be required. Indigenous communities now have the opportunity to participate in field work required for a Stage 1 AA, including the opportunity to meet with archaeologists to discuss cultural areas of significance and oral history.

The inputs to, and results derived from, the Stage 1 AA inform route evaluation and determination. The draft Environmental Report (ER) and draft Stage 1 AA report are shared with Indigenous communities for review and comment. Where appropriate, comments received are considered and addressed through updates to the ER and Stage 1 AA. The final reports, along with a complete log of comments received and responses provided, are then included in LTC and LTC exemption applications submitted to the OEB for consideration.

If archaeological potential remains within the archaeological study area of the chosen preferred route, additional AAs will be recommended in the ER to be undertaken prior to any ground disturbance activities. If required, a Stage 2 AA is undertaken once the preferred route is further refined and construction workspaces are confirmed. This typically occurs following finalization of the ER with any input from Indigenous communities, regulatory authorities, and landowner groups considered. At the EA development stage, detailed design and final workspace requirements are not yet defined, and these details directly determine the location and extent of potential archaeological disturbance.

Stage 2 AAs are generally undertaken after ER submission but prior to construction, at a stage when investigations can be accurately focused on areas where ground disturbance is proposed. Conducting a Stage 2 AA prior to finalizing the ER would require testing across the broader Stage 1 AA study area rather than the defined construction footprint. This approach would not reliably reflect the locations of actual ground disturbance and could result in unnecessary or premature disturbance of archaeological resources. It would also be inappropriate given design uncertainty, access limitations, seasonal constraints, and land-use considerations. As project design advances, additional localized, site-specific changes may continue to occur as further AAs are completed and avoidance and mitigation measures are applied.

Alignment with OEB's Environmental Guidelines

Enbridge Gas follows the approach outlined in the OEB's Environmental Guidelines, which require that AAs be conducted by licensed consultants for all hydrocarbon projects and that, at a minimum, a Stage 1 AA be completed during the planning phase. Where a Stage 2 AA is recommended and a combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 AA is not feasible, the Stage 2 AA is to be completed "as early as possible."¹ Enbridge Gas's practice of completing Stage 2 AAs once the preferred route and workspaces are confirmed meets the direction set out in the Environmental Guidelines by aligning archaeological investigations with actual impact areas and ensuring that assessments are meaningful, defensible, and protective of cultural resources.

OEB decisions frequently include conditions that require Enbridge Gas to complete the additional required assessments identified in the ER. These conditions provide regulatory oversight and ensure that archaeological assessments are undertaken before any ground disturbance occurs.

Consultation, Review, and Participation

Enbridge Gas's consultation commitments are not limited to the submission of the final ER. Indigenous communities, including Wendat Nation, are engaged at the outset of project

¹ OEB, Environmental Guidelines for Hydrocarbon Projects and Facilities in Ontario (last revised March 2023) [[link](#)], p. 32.

development following the provision of Duty to Consult determinations by the Ministry of Energy and Mines and prior to the initiation of the EA. Once the EA is initiated, Indigenous communities are provided ongoing opportunities to share Indigenous Knowledge, identify areas of cultural significance, and now are offered the opportunity to participate in Stage 1 AA fieldwork. Indigenous communities are also invited to participate in Stage 2 AA fieldwork, and Enbridge Gas provides Indigenous communities with the opportunity to review draft Stage 1 and Stage 2 AA reports.

Enbridge Gas acknowledges Wendat Nation's request to receive Stage 2 AA reports during the draft ER review and to be provided with a minimum 30-day review period, with the possibility of an extension where warranted. However, as described above, completing the Stage 2 AA prior to the completion of the ER when the final preferred route has not been determined can result in unnecessary or premature ground disturbance. Furthermore, recognizing the significant opportunities Indigenous communities have to review relevant project information and share concerns regarding archaeological resources throughout early project development as well as Enbridge Gas's commitment to ongoing engagement, an additional 30-day review period could impose unnecessary constraints on the project schedule. For these reasons, Enbridge Gas does not believe these steps to be necessary or preferred.

To address Wendat Nation's concerns, Enbridge Gas remains committed to early notification of archaeological field programs and to working collaboratively with Wendat Nation to support meaningful participation, including the deployment of field representatives where appropriate and sharing draft Stage 1 and Stage 2 AA reports. These steps will minimize any risk to archaeological resources. The OEB's standard condition of approval in its LTC and LTC exemption decisions, requiring Enbridge Gas to implement all recommendations of the ER, provides additional assurance that Stage 2 AA will be undertaken on all areas that retain archaeological potential prior to construction. Enbridge Gas remains committed to ongoing engagement and adaptive mitigation management during the project lifecycle.

Leave to Construct Exemption

Enbridge Gas wishes to clarify that an exemption from the requirement to obtain LTC does not exempt a project from other applicable regulatory requirements, including those under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, nor does it diminish Enbridge Gas's consultation obligations or the ability to implement accommodations or modifications in response to archaeological discoveries. Commitments and mitigation measures identified through the EA, as well as information provided and commitments made to Indigenous communities during consultation, form part of the conditions of OEB approval and are implemented through construction and throughout the project lifecycle.

Enbridge Gas remains committed to maintaining an open, respectful, and constructive dialogue with the Wendat Nation and to supporting a consultation process that allows for the thorough identification and management of potential impacts to archaeological heritage and Aboriginal and treaty rights throughout the life of our projects.

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Patricia Squires

Patricia Squires
Manager, Regulatory Applications – Leave to Construct

Cc:
Richard Lanni (Enbridge Gas Counsel)
Mathieu Lariviere (Wendat Nation)
Zora Crnojacki (OEB staff)