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The Honorable Keith Ellison
Office of Minnesota Attorney General
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Attorney General Ellison:

The Attorney General is Minnesota’s chief legal officer and our state’s top law enforcement executive. The Office of the Attorney General also provides support to counties to help them as they prosecute cases and deal with other criminal matters.

This is an important job at a key time for Minnesota. Recently, charged suspects who have not only committed serious crimes but livestreamed the lawlessness are attempting to circumvent the justice system by removing prosecution authority out of the jurisdictions in which criminal actions occurred. This raises an important question of policy that you must address.

Hundreds of people were arrested during violent protests that attempted to stop work to replace the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline. The “protestors,” many of whom came from across the nation in a planned and coordinated campaign, forced local first responders to spend countless hours away from the communities they serve to deal with people chaining themselves to trucks, [vandalizing construction equipment](#), and threatening others.¹

Many of these protests were organized by Honor the Earth and its leader, Winona LaDuke – who herself was arrested several times. As the more than 900 people who were arrested during the protests are being held accountable via the judicial process, [the protestors are asking Minnesota Governor Walz to appoint you as a special prosecutor for “the most egregious cases.”](#)²

I call on you to publicly reject the request to be appointed special prosecutor for these cases and to instead let local prosecutors and members of our outstanding law enforcement community know you support their work to hold people accountable for their actions.

¹ *Park Rapids Enterprise*. “Line 3 protesters vandalize Enbridge equipment.” June 10, 2021.

² [dropline3charges.com/call-tim-walz](#). “Call MN Governor Tim Walz.” Accessed July 18, 2022.

It is clear why the defendants of these “most egregious cases” are so anxious that you be appointed. They obviously believe that you will reduce or drop criminal charges, allowing those presently charged with these crimes to avoid accountability.

It is understandable why Honor the Earth leader Winona LaDuke would make this request, given that you stood with her in the past at events [to support people who used the same tactics to try to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline.](#)³ In fact, Ms. LaDuke [stood with you when you announced the lawsuit](#) against fossil fuel companies.⁴

What happened in Minnesota during the Line 3 construction was wrong and dangerous. There were several situations where first responders risked their own lives to save protestors from imminent harm who had [trespassed into open sections of pipe](#) or into active construction sites.⁵ Yet in some instances, protester leaders showed up at local jails with [duffle bags of cash](#) to make sure the protestors were quickly bailed out.⁶

Minnesota has seen far too many protests that have escalated from legitimate free speech into illegal violent acts. Our first responders have been forced to spend countless hours going above and beyond the call of duty to enforce the rule of law while also keeping people safe. We now have local prosecutors carrying out their important role to ensure that individuals who engaged in reckless, dangerous, and illegal behavior are held accountable.

It is time that Minnesotans hear directly from you. Do you stand with your friend Ms. LaDuke and the protests she helped organize or do you support and stand with first responders and our local prosecutors who are fulfilling their role to keep us safe and ensure individuals are held accountable for their actions?

Minnesotans count on you and the attorney general’s office to lead in these matters. With the significance and severity of what has happened, Minnesotans deserve to know if you will stand with law enforcement to uphold the rule of law and hold individuals accountable or, on the contrary, you believe violent protests are acceptable and stand with individuals charged with violent crime.

Sincerely



Jim Schultz

³ MPR News. “Demonstrators echo N.D. pipeline protest at Minneapolis City Hall.” October 28, 2016.

⁴ *Star Tribune*. “Minnesota files climate change lawsuit against oil companies including Koch Industries, ExxonMobil.” June 24, 2020.

⁵ *Brainerd Dispatch*. “Emergency responders rescue 2 protesters who climbed into Enbridge pipe.” June 27, 2021.

⁶ *Alpha News*. “Line 3 protesters are being bailed out with duffel bags full of cash.” July 13, 2021.