

# Pipeline Explosion in Minnesota Highlights Ongoing Dangers of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

*A Minnesota pipeline explosion underscores the dangers of gas infrastructure as communities in NC fight SSEP, MVP Southgate, and T-15.*

REIDSVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES, January 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A natural gas pipeline explosion near the east-central Minnesota town of Willow River on January 16, 2026, underscores the persistent safety risks posed by aging and expanding [fossil fuel](#) infrastructure across the United States. According to the Pine County Sheriff's Office, a large pipeline burst at approximately 1:43 p.m., triggering an explosion about 40 miles southwest of Duluth.



While no injuries were reported, more than 600 customers of Minnesota Energy Resources were left without heat, disrupting households and businesses during winter conditions and raising urgent concerns about public safety and reliability.

"This incident is yet another reminder that [pipelines leak](#)—and they are not safe," said Dr. Crystal Cavalier-Keck, Executive Director of 7 Directions of Service. "Across the country, communities are bearing the risk of infrastructure failures that threaten lives, homes, and essential services."

The explosion comes as frontline and Indigenous-led organizations in North Carolina continue to oppose multiple proposed gas pipeline projects, including the Southeast Supply Enhancement (SSEP) pipeline, Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate (MVP Southgate), and the T-15 pipeline. Advocates warn that expanding fossil fuel infrastructure increases the likelihood of accidents while locking communities into long-term environmental and climate harms.

"From Minnesota to North Carolina, the pattern is clear," Cavalier-Keck added. "Communities are

being asked to accept unacceptable risks for projects that undermine climate stability, public health, and energy resilience. We need investments in safer, cleaner, community-centered energy solutions—not more pipelines.”

7 Directions of Service calls on regulators, utilities, and policymakers to halt new pipeline construction, conduct rigorous safety and environmental reviews of existing lines, and prioritize energy systems that protect people, water, and the climate.

#### About 7 Directions of Service

7 Directions of Service is an Indigenous-led nonprofit organization advancing environmental justice, land and water protection, and community-driven solutions rooted in Indigenous knowledge and governance.

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