

2026

Bakken East Pipeline Project

901.08 — “We support legislation for the capture, expansion and distribution of natural gas throughout the state of North Dakota.”

901.11 — “We support new construction of pipelines in and out of state such as Keystone Pipeline and other construction projects that would help transport liquids and or gas in or out of the state.”

The proposed Bakken East Pipeline, sponsored by WBI Energy Transmission, Inc., a subsidiary of MDU Resources, would move natural gas from the Bakken region near Watford City to the Mapleton area west of Fargo. The project is intended to expand natural gas takeaway capacity, reduce flaring pressure, support continued oil production, and provide natural gas for power generation, industry, local distribution companies, and communities in central and eastern North Dakota.

As of June 2026, the project is in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s pre-filing environmental review process. Full FERC certification and other permits would be required before construction could begin. Target in-service dates are late 2029 for Phase 1 and 2030 for Phase 2.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Route and Capacity:** The project would include roughly 350 to 374 miles of pipeline, beginning near Watford City and extending east across North Dakota to the Mapleton area. Possible extensions or laterals are also under consideration from the Jamestown area to Spiritwood and Ellendale area.
- **Purpose:** The pipeline would provide additional takeaway capacity for Bakken natural gas while delivering gas to communities, industrial users, power generation, and other end users across the state.
- **Land and Agricultural Footprint:** The permanent easement would affect a narrow corridor, while temporary construction impacts would be broader but short-term. Most affected land is expected to return to agricultural production after construction.
- **Economic Effects:** The project could create construction jobs, increase local property tax revenue, and support rural economic development. Expanded natural gas access may also benefit agriculture-related uses such as grain drying, irrigation, livestock facilities, value-added processing, and rural industry.

CURRENT STATUS (JUNE 2026)

- **Landowner Engagement:** WBI has reported securing survey permission from over 80% of landowners along the proposed route. Land rights acquired primarily through voluntary negotiated easements.
- **State Support:** The 2025 Legislature authorized a financial guarantee up to \$500 million; approved by the North Dakota Industrial Commission in April 2026. Primary siting and environmental review authority rests with FERC, with opportunities for county, township, and public input on routing, road use, and agricultural protections.

LANDOWNER AND AGRICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Easements and Eminent Domain:** Land rights acquired primarily through voluntary negotiated easements. Eminent domain authority under the federal Natural Gas Act (if a FERC certificate is granted) or North Dakota law serves as a backstop available only after good-faith negotiations fail and only for the specific right-of-way needed.
- **Economic Benefits to Rural Areas:** Ongoing property tax revenue supports counties and townships, including schools and roads. Reliable natural gas delivery supports power generation and industrial development that benefits agricultural value-added processing, grain drying, irrigation, and livestock operations.
- **Timeline:** Construction is not expected to begin until after full FERC certification and other permits are secured. Target in-service: November 2029 for Phase 1 (western to central ND) and November 2030 for Phase 2 (central to eastern ND).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

NDFB policy supports the expansion and distribution of natural gas in North Dakota.

- ▶ Do you currently have pipelines crossing your land, or have you dealt with pipeline construction in the past? What has that experience been like?
- ▶ What opportunities could expanding natural gas access create for farms, ranches, rural communities, and value-added agriculture in North Dakota?