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Great Lakes Michigan Jobs Coalition: Michigan Residents Back Line 5 – Support the Great Lakes Tunnel

Move by Whitmer Administration to Shut Down Line 5 will Kill Jobs, Increase Energy Costs

Lansing, Mich – Members of the Great Lakes Michigan Jobs Coalition today expressed their strong bipartisan support for Line 5, and called on state regulators to move forward immediately with permitting for the Great Lakes Tunnel project.

Their statement comes after a move by the Whitmer administration to revoke the easement allowing Line 5 to operate, and to shutdown the pipeline. Shutting down Line 5 will kill Michigan jobs and send fuel costs skyrocketing for homeowners, workers and employers.

“Shutting down Line 5 would hurt workers and it would hurt families,” said Geno Alessandrini, business manager of the Michigan Laborers Union. “Labor and business, Republicans and Democrats, we all support the Great Lakes Tunnel because it creates and protects jobs and affordable energy. Today’s move would kill jobs and increase fuel costs. That’s the last thing Michigan needs as we work to overcome the coronavirus pandemic.”

Said Mike Alaimo, Director of Environmental and Energy Policy at the Michigan Chamber of Commerce: “Businesses and consumers across the state rely on the jobs, the fuel, and the affordable energy delivered by Line 5. Shutting down the pipeline would threaten them all. Instead, let’s focus on a solution that works for everyone – building the Great Lakes Tunnel.”

Majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents support construction of the Tunnel, believe it’s the best solution for Line 5, and want the state to move forward immediately with permitting for the project, according to the new survey results, according to a poll conducted this autumn by TargetPoint Consulting.

“Michigan workers and members of the Michigan Pipe Trades rely on Line 5 and we’re counting on the Great Lakes Tunnel,” said Price Dobernack, President of the Michigan Pipe Trades Association. “Shutting down Line 5 would hurt pipe fitters and would hurts our families. Instead, let’s build the Tunnel.”

The Great Lakes Tunnel will move a portion of Line 5 out of the water in the Straits of Mackinac and place it into a state-of-the-art tunnel buried deep below the lakebed, providing multiple layers of protection and, according to an analysis by the state of Michigan, make the chances of a leak into the Straits virtually zero.

(MORE)

"Shutting down Line 5 would kill thousands of jobs in Michigan, severely impact manufacturing, and cost our economy hundreds of millions of dollars when the State is already reeling from a pandemic," said Mike Johnston, Vice President of the Michigan Manufacturers Association. "The DNR's move is an affront to Enbridge, its customers and employees, which will dramatically increase the cost of heating homes in the UP and increase costs on industry in Michigan, when the company is taking unprecedented positive steps to fund and build a long-term solution – the Great Lakes Tunnel. The unreasonable approach hinders positive progress for Michigan citizens and damages Michigan's business climate."

Said Amy Clickner, Chief Executive Officer of the Lake Superior Community Partnership in Marquette: "The Great Lakes Tunnel and Line 5 are essential to ensuring our families, homes and businesses safely get the energy they need. This is not just an Upper Peninsula issue. It is critical to the entire state."

Said John Dulmes, Executive Director of the Michigan Chemistry Council: "Line 5 safely supplies our state with essential raw materials, including energy and ingredients for products everyone uses in their daily lives. We support Line 5 and the Great Lakes Tunnel because they support the more than 80,000 jobs in Michigan's business of chemistry, and those workers matter. Today's announcement jeopardizes our economy and those jobs."

Among key findings from the poll, **60% of voters surveyed support the Tunnel, with only 16% opposed.**

73% of Republicans support construction. 57% of Independents back the building project, with only 20% opposed, and Democrats support it more than 2 to 1, with 52% in support and just 21% opposed.

"Winter is coming, and this is just another strike against small businesses in the Upper Peninsula that are already on the ropes from the Covid-19 pandemic," said Charlie Owens, State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business. "The closure of Line 5 would have an immediate and crippling effect on the state's economy as prices skyrocket and small business would be among the first to suffer the consequences of such a short-sighted action."

Leading Michigan voices from labor, business and industry have formed the Great Lakes Michigan Jobs coalition, offering public comment before the Michigan Public Service Commission, and filed individual public comments with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, and other regulatory bodies in support of the Tunnel. They are speaking out together, encouraging state and federal agencies currently reviewing permit applications – and all Michiganders – to embrace the Tunnel project, and the lakes and jobs it protects.

The coalition has also submitted to Michigan regulators nearly 5,000 individual public comment cards and petition signatures from individuals who support construction of the Great Lakes Tunnel.

Said Mark Griffin, President of the Michigan Petroleum Association and Michigan Association of Convenience Stores: "We find this latest action by the Administration to be disappointing, misguided, and devastating for the thousands of men and women who rely on Line 5 for their jobs. In the end, we knew there would be further court action. Sadly, court action not only wastes the States resources, but potentially puts the economic well being of the people of Michigan and the Great Lakes region at risk."

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