

THE FACTS ABOUT LINE 5: How We Can Protect the Great Lakes from an Oil Spill

Summer 2023



We are united by our love of the Great Lakes - the largest, most valuable fresh surface water system in the world. The Lakes provide drinking water for millions of people in the United States and Canada, drive our economy, and define our way of life.

BACKGROUND

FLOW is a founding member of the **Oil & Water Don't Mix** campaign, a diverse coalition formed to prevent a catastrophic oil spill from Line 5 in the Great Lakes.



Line 5 is owned and operated by Enbridge, the same Canadian corporation responsible for the 2010 spill of more than **1.2 million gallons of heavy tar sands oil** into the Kalamazoo River watershed near Marshall, Michigan.

That spill remains **one of the largest inland oil spills in U.S. history**. It took four years and over **\$1.2 billion** to clean it up to the limited extent possible.

THE GOOD NEWS

On June 16, 2023, Wisconsin federal Judge William Conley issued a court order to shut down **Line 5 in three years**. The court also found that **Line 5 is trespassing on Indian land**, and presents an **imminent risk of catastrophic failure**.



THE BAD NEWS

On June 28, 2023, the Army Corps of Engineers issued two "Memoranda for Record" **limiting the scope of its environmental impact review** to only the 4-mile segment of Line 5 in the Straits of Mackinac, and declining to consider the **effects of continued long-term use of fossil fuels, climate impacts, or engineering concerns** that have been identified by experts.



OUTDATED, DECAYING, VULNERABLE

Every day, Line 5 carries nearly 23 million gallons of oil and natural gas liquids (NGLs) from the oil sands fields in western Canada to refineries in Ontario, using the **Straits of Mackinac as a high-risk shortcut**.



Built in 1953 and designed to last 50 years, **Line 5 is 70 years old** and operates in fierce currents on the bottom lands of the Straits - which are held in the public trust.

Ship anchors and other objects have **repeatedly dented and gouged Line 5**, and its protective coating has been **damaged in numerous spots**.



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TRACK RECORD OF FAILURE

Line 5 crosses hundreds of rivers, streams, and wetlands. Outside the Straits, Line 5 has failed at least 33 times since 1968, spilling more than 1.1 million gallons of oil in Michigan and Wisconsin.

An oil spill in the Straits could pollute vast reaches of open water and 720 miles of shoreline along Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, according to the University of Michigan. Scientists at Michigan Technological University have characterized the Deepwater Horizon and Exxon Valdez disasters as “useful analogies for [the] ecological impacts” of a Line 5 rupture in the Straits.



ECONOMIC DISASTER

A Line 5 oil spill in the Straits of Mackinac could strike a **\$6 billion blow to Michigan’s economy**, communities, and natural resources, and have an **additional \$45 billion dollar impact** to the region’s commercial shipping and steel production, according to studies commissioned by FLOW and conducted by Michigan State University experts.



A RISKY PROPOSAL

Enbridge proposes to bore and blast a 21-foot diameter tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac to house a new Line 5 pipeline, whose fossil fuel contents, when burned, would release climate pollution each year equivalent to nearly seven new coal-fired power plants.

Engineering and geologic experts warn the proposed tunnel is a dangerous and untested design, particularly for NGLs, which pose a catastrophic explosion risk. Moreover, Enbridge’s own depreciation study filed with FERC in 2021 shows that Line 5 will be a stranded asset by 2040.

ACHIEVING ENERGY SECURITY AND MEETING CLIMATE GOALS



According to Enbridge’s own experts and others, we can meet the energy needs of the Great Lakes region with smart adjustments to the existing North American pipeline system that don’t threaten our waters.



Enbridge’s own experts testified that gas prices would rise **only half a penny** in Michigan if Line 5 is shut down. Other oil companies have already made plans to diversify supply in preparation for a Line 5 shutdown.



To achieve **net-zero emissions by 2050**, the International Energy Agency’s road map report concludes that **no new investments in fossil fuel infrastructure can occur**. This takes Enbridge’s proposals to build a Great Lakes tunnel and construct a 41-mile pipeline reroute around the Bad River Band reservation in Wisconsin **off the table**.

TAKE ACTION ON LINE 5

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LINE 5 IN THE COURTS

In order to protect the Great Lakes and our public trust rights to use and enjoy them, **Governor Gretchen Whitmer ordered Enbridge to shut down Line 5 by May 2021.** The State of Michigan and Attorney General Dana Nessel remain committed to this legal course while **Enbridge defies the shutdown order**, leaving Line 5 exposed to exceptionally strong currents, lakebed scouring, anchor and cable strikes, and corrosion.

While Enbridge defies the State's shutdown order, **Line 5 remains a clear and present danger.** The 2019 AG case currently hangs in limbo in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, where the court will decide whether the case will remain in state court (where it was originally filed) or move to federal court.

Join FLOW today as we and our allies support the State of Michigan's and tribes' shutdown efforts and **build the movement to stop an oil spill disaster in the heart of the Great Lakes.**

Alternatives exist for supplying oil and propane, **but there is no alternative to the Great Lakes!**

Individuals, families, organizations, communities, governments, tribes, businesses, and faith leaders are **working together to shut down Line 5 before it's too late.**



Scan code to download this fact sheet and visit our library of Line 5 resources.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:



STAY CURRENT

Sign up for eNews at ForLoveOfWater.org and OilandWaterDontMix.org. Follow both on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



GET THE FACTS

Visit ForLoveOfWater.org/Line5 for articles, reports, videos, and webinars.



SPEAK UP

Enbridge may have a huge advertising budget, but **a chorus of voices will be heard!** Write a letter to the editor, email your lawmakers, sign petitions, and display a yard sign.



SPREAD THE WORD

Print and share this fact sheet and other reports from our website, along with the other handouts.



SHOW UP AND STAND UP

Attend hearings about the proposed oil tunnel with the Michigan Public Service Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -- those sessions must allow public comment.



SUPPORT FLOW

Visit ForLoveOfWater.org/donate and help us continue to make the case to shut down Line 5.