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Contact: Jim Lively, Coordinating Director – 231.360.7222, [glnconnect@gmail.com](mailto:glnconnect@gmail.com)

Lisa Dinon, Coordinator – 734.887.7126, [glnconnect@gmail.com](mailto:glnconnect@gmail.com)

**Business Leaders Support Action by MI Attorney General, Urge Governor Whitmer to Follow Suit**

Today Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel filed motions for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction in Ingham County Circuit Court for an immediate shut down of the Line 5 pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac in response to the recent news of “significant damage” to the pipeline infrastructure. In response to this news, several Great Lakes Business Network members spoke out in support of the Attorney General’s action and called on Governor Whitmer to join the Attorney General in taking swift action to shut down the pipeline and prevent a devastating oil spill. Governor Whitmer issued a separate statement supporting, but not joining the Attorney General.

Larry Bell, Founder and President of Bell’s Brewery in Kalamazoo said, “Governor Whitmer has shown strong leadership in the face of COVID, and now needs to show similar resolve and shut down the Line 5 pipeline. These new revelations of failed anchor supports prove yet again delaying action only increases the risk of an economic and environmental disaster—this pipeline needs to be shut down immediately.”

The Great Lakes Business Network, a coalition of more than 130 business leaders, has held a position seeking the decommissioning of Line 5 at the Straits of Mackinac for more than three years, and the news released last Friday from Whitmer’s office that Canadian pipeline company Enbridge had voluntarily and temporarily shut down the pipeline because of a damaged support was particularly alarming.

According to Chris Shepler of Shepler’s Mackinac Island Ferry, “The COVID restrictions, which I support, have my family’s ferry business reeling. If there were any type of Line 5 rupture in the Straits now, we could never withstand the economic hit from such a disaster. It would immediately put me and many other Mackinac Straits area businesses out of business for good. I call on Governor Whitmer to use her authority to shut down Line 5 now.”

Cherry Republic President Bob Sutherland has long been outspoken about Line 5 from his Glen Arbor-based business. “Northern Michigan has lived with the threat of an oil spill from Line 5 for too long, and this recent revelation that the anchor support infrastructure is failing is more than enough grounds for Governor Whitmer to use her authority to revoke the Enbridge easement and shut down Line 5 to protect Michigan businesses,” Sutherland said.

# GREAT LAKES BUSINESS NETWORK

Rich Bergmann, owner of Round Lake Group, LLC, is a northern Michigan hospitality business leader in the Great Lakes Business Network, based in Charlevoix County. “Northern Michigan is finally starting to recover from the COVID pandemic, and the businesses up here are extremely fragile and really suffering,” Bergman said. “Communities like Charlevoix rely on Lake Michigan for drinking water, and if there were a Line 5 spill that closed our public water supply, we couldn’t withstand that disaster. I implore the governor to take decisive action immediately to shut down Line 5 in light of this urgent threat.”

Peter Laing, Partner of MAWBY Vineyards & Winery in Leelanau County, commented “Enbridge has operated Line 5 in an unsafe manner for far too long already. The damage to an anchor support that was disclosed on Friday is another bullet dodged by an increasingly aging target. We can’t risk an oil spill to show us what we ‘should have’ or ‘could have’ done to protect the Great Lakes, and those of us who depend on them for our businesses and way of life. I urge Governor Whitmer to join AG Nessel in taking action to shield the Great Lakes from this ongoing threat.”

Juliette King McAvoy of King Orchards in Central Lake noted, “Governor Whitmer must fulfill her duty to protect public trust and act with urgency to revoke Enbridge’s operating easement in the Straits of Mackinac. Allowing Line 5 to pump oil through our most pristine waters is a risk to our businesses, communities and precious natural resources. We appreciate the aggressive action Attorney General Nessel has taken to protect the Great Lakes and we call the governor to join her in this effort and act now on her authority to decommission Line 5.”

Beryl Skrocki, owner of Sleeping Bear Surf and Kayak in Empire, outlines support for the Attorney General. “We are pleased that the Attorney General continues to stand up for Michigan citizens. The Great Lakes are vital to Michigan’s economy, therefore immediate action to remove this threat is of the utmost importance. We urge the governor to remain firm on holding Enbridge accountable—she needs to take action to revoke the easement.”

Charlie Wunsch, Co-Publisher of Edible Grande Traverse magazine, said, “Right now is the time to heed the canary in this coal mine. We have been given adequate warning again and again by these near misses. Let’s act now to avert the ecological devastation that a rupture in Line 5 will cause. Aside from the direct impact on the natural world that we each so cherish (and that surrounds us all) such an event will be catastrophic to the regional economy—bringing an end-game scale of waste. Lastly, water is NOT ‘the new oil.’ Water is LIFE—full stop. To ruin over 20% of the planet’s freshwater overnight is incalculably ignorant: Suicidal.”