GREAT LAKES
BUSINESS NETWORK

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Business Leaders Applaud Gov. Whitmer's Call to End Line 5's Decade of Delay, Urging Immediate Shutdown

LANSING, MI – Today members of the Great Lakes Business Network thanked Governor Gretchen Whitmer and EGLE Director Phil Roos for recognizing that EGLE's proposed Line 5 tunnel cannot continue to be treated as a foregone conclusion or realistic alternative to the dual pipelines on the bottom of Lake Michigan. They applauded the Governor for hearing the concerns of Michiganders and issuing a forceful statement demanding that Enbridge pursue timely alternatives to get the oil out of the Great Lakes now.

Following the landmark July 31 decision by the Michigan Supreme Court which set aside the Michigan Public Service Commission's tunnel approval, Governor Whitmer and EGLE announced that the state must reassess their own recently issued tunnel permits in light of the ruling. In an open letter sent to Enbridge CEO Gregory Ebel, the Governor rightfully called on the company to abandon their tunnel-or-bust framing and to pursue an orderly shutdown of the existing pipelines within months, not years. Communities and leaders from across the state have come together to hold Whitmer accountable and this is the result. The Great Lakes are a unifying issue and essential to protect.

"We are grateful to Governor Whitmer for echoing the words of business leaders across the region: The tunnel is not a plan – it's a lucrative stalling tactic.," said **Bob Sutherland, President and Founder of Cherry Republic and former GLBN co-chair**, "Every year Enbridge spends in court is yet another year that our businesses and local economies carry the risk of a spill in the Straits. The Governor is right – we cannot keep waiting for a tunnel pipe dream that may never be built."

GLBN members also pointed out the catastrophic Enbridge Line 5 spill in Iron County, WI on August 25, 2026 – it marked the largest oil and gas spill in Wisconsin's history. Business leaders said that the spill was proof that Enbridge's infrastructure cannot be trusted to operate safely, while allowing viable alternatives to sit on the shelf.

"We just witnessed the worst pipeline spill in Wisconsin history, at the hands of Enbridge," said **Juliette McAvoy, VP of Sales & Marketing for King Orchards**. That is exactly the kind of disaster our members have been warning about for years and it is a preview of what is at stake in the Straits. The Great Lakes support a $9.3 trillion regional economy and provide drinking water for 40 million people. We can't gamble on a 73-year old pipeline for another decade."

"It's time for Enbridge to stop stalling and start protecting the Great Lakes economy that business runs on," said **Peter Laing, Managing Member of MAWBY Winery and Vineyard.** "We are grateful to Governor Whitmer and Director Roos for finally calling a spade a spade. Now we must begin the work of decommissioning Line 5 once and for all."

"We applaud Michigan decision makers for voicing opposition to the Line 5 tunnel project," said **Jillian Storms of Patagonia's Fulton Market store.** "We continue to stand with Tribal leaders, the outdoor recreation community and businesses in calling for alternatives that protect the Great Lakes and our regional economy."

"The governor is right: Line 5's days are numbered, the tunnel is not an option, and Enbridge must come up with other alternatives," **closed Andy Buchsbaum, attorney for the Great Lakes Business Network.** "The good news is that there already are plenty of cost-effective alternatives to get oil and propane to Michigan consumers and refineries without Line 5. Enbridge's own experts admit that other pipelines, waterborne shipping — not through the Great Lakes — and rail will replace all of Line 5's oil and propane when it shuts down. And that's not even considering that clean energy alternatives already are reducing the demand for Line 5 and growing Michigan jobs and the Michigan economy. Our businesses rely on oil and propane; we wouldn't support a shutdown if it meant supply shortages or price increases."

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