

# UPDATE: Line 5 at the Straits of Mackinac

The draft Alternatives Analysis for the Straits of Mackinac Pipeline report was released by the State of Michigan this summer for public comment. The Watershed Council took the opportunity not only to submit detailed comments on the draft report, but we also held public engagement workshops to help citizens effectively participate in the public comment process. Thanks to generous funding provided by the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, we hosted seven workshops throughout Northern Michigan, providing approximately 100 individuals with information on what was in the draft Alternatives Analysis report, including our critique of the report and how to most effectively submit public comments.

The Watershed Council's comments were among the thousands that residents, environmentalists, local governments, petroleum trade associations, state agencies, and even the government of Canada submitted in response to the draft report. Our comments focused on the significant errors in the report that led to inappropriate evaluations and conclusions. We provided a long list of primary concerns including flawed methodologies, inaccurate assumptions, and extensive data gaps.

In particular, the report failed to evaluate the "worst-case spill" scenario, significantly underestimating the probability, size, and impact of a spill in the Straits of Mackinac. This also led to a

dramatic undervaluation of the costs associated with a release. With respect to the alternatives, the report failed to analyze multi-modal options or the use of multiple modes to transport the commodities. The report also took an approach that assumes that the citizens of Michigan are responsible for ensuring that Enbridge Energy can deliver its products. This results in the elimination of certain alternatives prematurely. There is a lengthy list of vital information missing from the draft report including how long the current pipeline can effectively operate without needing to be replaced or repaired, and how regulatory requirements and timeframes impact alternatives. For example, Attorney General Bill Schuette has stated, "You wouldn't site, and you wouldn't build and construct pipelines underneath the Straits today." The list of missing information also includes how past excessive span lengths impacted pipeline integrity, how frequent anchor drops occur in the Great Lakes, and so much more.

We hope that these and all the other deficiencies pointed out during the public comment period are adequately addressed before the report is made final. After all, the Alternatives Analysis is a critical component to ensure the State makes the best decision regarding the future of Line 5 and our water resources.

To read the full comments the Watershed Council submitted, visit [www.watershedcouncil.org/pipeline](http://www.watershedcouncil.org/pipeline).

## ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FOR LINE 5 AT THE STRAITS OF MACKINAC Opportunities to Submit Public Comments on Final Report

The Alternatives Analysis final report is scheduled to be released publicly on November 20 and comments will be accepted at public meetings, online, or by mail until December 22.

With the report's release November 20 on the Pipeline Safety Advisory Board website (<https://mipetroleumpipelines.com>), a 30-day window opens for online comments about what the State should do regarding the future of Line 5. The December 22 deadline for comments includes two additional days to account for the Thanksgiving state holidays during the comment period. Comments can also be mailed to: Department of Environmental Quality, Attn: Line 5 Alternatives Analysis, P.O. Box 30473, Lansing, MI 48909-7973.

Three public feedback sessions have been scheduled in December so the public can suggest the next steps the State should take

regarding Line 5, based on information in the final version of the independent Alternatives Analysis.

- **Wednesday, December 6, in Taylor**, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center, Wayne County Community College District, Downriver Campus, 21000 Northline Road.
- **Tuesday, December 12, in St. Ignace**, beginning at 6 p.m., at Little Bear Arena & Community Center, 275 Marquette Street
- **Wednesday, December 13, in Traverse City**, beginning at 6 p.m., at the West Bay Beach Holiday Inn Resort, Leelanau Banquet Rooms, 615 E. Front Street.

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