



**Committee of Advisors  
to the  
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



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**MEDIA ADVISORY: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GREAT LAKES FISHING INTERESTS URGE IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT OF  
THE STRAITS OF MACKINAC PIPELINE**

***Binational advisory committee deeply concerned about condition of aging pipeline***

(June 18, 2014)—The bi-national committee of advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission urged immediate replacement of the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline that runs through the Straits of Mackinac between Lakes Michigan and Huron. The call – which came in the form of a binational resolution, approved during the advisors’ annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois – joins a growing chorus of concern, information requests, and calls for action from Great Lakes organizations, congressional members, and citizens.

The committee—representing recreational and commercial fishing, Aboriginal communities, public-at-large, academia, and state agencies—stressed that a spill anywhere in the Great Lakes Basin, particularly in the Straits of Mackinac, would have far-reaching implications on fishery restoration, fish habitat, the health of the ecosystem, and the recovery of the Great Lakes, affecting the economic and physical well-being of millions of people who live, work, recreate in the basin and subsist on Great Lakes fish.

The Enbridge Energy Inc. owned pipeline, Line 5, which runs beneath the Mackinac Bridge in the Straits of Mackinac, is more than sixty years old and consists of 2 parallel pipelines that are each 4 miles long and 20 inches in diameter. Recent underwater inspection of the pipeline conducted by the National Wildlife Federation showed the pipeline is structurally unsupported in many areas and is exhibiting signs of significant deterioration. The area where the pipeline runs under the Straits is especially sensitive and vulnerable as it is subjected regularly to intense environmental stressors such as fast-moving currents and frequent ice-cover.

Advisors noted that each day, 22 million gallons of crude oil, primarily tar sands (called bitumen), and natural gas fluids flow through Enbridge’s Line 5 pipeline. The pipeline was not initially constructed to

*The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from First Nation, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are nominated by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.*

transport diluted bitumen (called dilbit) which requires higher pressure than conventional crude oils to move through the line; the higher pressures increase the likelihood of corrosion and ruptures on the pipeline. Enbridge recently began pumping 10% more oil through Line 5 and has proposed a series of small pipeline projects that will further increase the daily load by 1.8 million gallons.

“An oil spill due to a pipeline rupture at the junction of the two lakes would be catastrophic,” said U.S. committee chair Denny Grinold from the Michigan Charter Boat Association. “An Enbridge-owned pipeline was responsible for the spill in the Kalamazoo River in 2010 that absolutely devastated that ecosystem. The spill, which is the largest on record in the lower forty-eight states, resulted in roughly one million gallons of dilbit being released into the river and an estimated one billion U.S. dollars for clean-up, which is still not completed. Perhaps the scariest part of the Kalamazoo River spill is that a federal review found that the spill was a result of Enbridge failing to repair known pipeline defects and a lax government oversight of pipeline maintenance and spill-response plans. We absolutely cannot afford to let this happen again, especially in an area where containment and clean-up would be nearly impossible.”

“The resolution reflects widespread agreement across two countries that an oil spill in the Straits of Mackinac is not just a Michigan crisis or a U.S. crisis—it’s an international crisis,” said John Jackson, Chair of the Canadian Committee of Advisors. “This pipeline is old, unsafe, and being used in a manner for which it was not constructed. It needs to be replaced immediately using the best technology that is available. An oil spill from Line 5 is a devastation that can be avoided and we, as stewards of the Great Lakes, have an obligation to act now before it is too late.”

A copy of the resolution is available on the Advisors’ web page: [www.glfc.org/staff/resol2014\\_1.pdf](http://www.glfc.org/staff/resol2014_1.pdf).

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