

Date: September 10, 2026

To: Governor Tony Evers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Wisconsin Agencies

Yesterday, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Director Phil Roos announced that the state is halting a key tunnel environmental permit and reopening the review.

Governor Whitmer also sent a letter to Enbridge opposing Line 5 oil in the Great Lakes, calling the tunnel project “untenable”. She notes that “One spill in the Straits could do irreparable damage to our water, our economy, and our way of life,” and that “the market can adapt to a Line 5 shutdown without significant shortages or price spikes.” Governor Whitmer is clear about the threat of Line 5 and is taking action to stop damage before it happens.

Governor Whitmer called on Enbridge to “start pursuing alternatives now that can get oil out of the Straits within months. Michigan has waited long enough. We cannot put the Great Lakes at risk for another decade while waiting for a solution that may never come.”

The catastrophic spill near Saxon, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2026, is not an isolated accident. It reflects a clear and dangerous pattern of Enbridge noncompliance that threatens public health, the environment, and Tribal sovereignty. Here is what is understood:

- The rupture, caused when an unattended truck rolled into an active work site, released at least 31,000 barrels (1.3 million gallons) of hazardous natural gas liquids (NGLs), including reported propane, butane, and ethane.
- The spill occurred on the existing Line 5 pipeline as part of a valve addition proposed through the controversial Line 5 reroute project, which has been the subject of years of litigation and concern over this high risk.
- The incident highlights systemic failures: it took Enbridge over an hour to report the spill to the DNR and federal agencies, raising immediate concerns about emergency response protocols that violated laws created from Enbridge’s past failures.
- The DNR has publicly expressed that it is “immensely frustrated” by Enbridge’s lack of responsiveness and noncompliance. This is the latest in a series of incidents, including multiple frac-outs this summer, demonstrating a systemic failure to maintain basic safety standards.
- Enbridge and federal oversight officials with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration blocking state officials from the site is a dangerous escalation of secrecy, risk, and defiance that cannot be ignored.

The warning signs in Wisconsin couldn’t be clearer – a massive pipeline rupture amid numerous drilling failures is more than enough to conclude that we can’t take on the risk of Line 5. It is imperative that all responding Wisconsin agencies and Governor Evers rise to the same standard as our Michigan neighbors and immediately take action:

Immediate Permit Revocation: Under Wisconsin law, the DNR holds clear authority to terminate permits for “substantial noncompliance” or when activities could “endanger human health or the environment.” We demand the immediate revocation and termination of all permits for Enbridge’s Line 5 expansion project. The window to act is closing, and every day of delay reinforces a “business-as-usual” status quo for the company. We call on Governor Evers to use the authority he already has.

Emergency Response and Investigation - Independence and Transparency: Demand and oversee an independent investigation into the root cause, site conditions, and Enbridge’s safety protocols. The state must ensure the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is engaged and that investigations are not left solely to the company or the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

Monitoring and Public Health: Ensure that state agencies are actively managing independent air, water, and groundwater monitoring. No part of the response or ongoing monitoring should rely solely on data provided by Enbridge. The public must know what specific compounds are being measured, where, and by whom. No responding agencies or public officers should enter non-disclosure agreements.

Sincerely,

350 Chicago
350 Wisconsin
Chequamegon Audubon Society
Clean Water Action Michigan
Communities United by Water
Echo Valley Hope
Environment Michigan
Family Farm Defenders
Flow Water Advocates (Flow)
Great Lakes Business Network
Groundwork Center
Healthy Climate Wisconsin
Indigenous Environmental Network
International Solidarity Climate Action
Michigan Climate Action Network
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
National Wildlife Federation
Native American Educational Technologies,
Inc. (NAET)

Native Lives Matter Coalition
Native Lives Matter Great Lakes
Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council
Oil and Water Don’t Mix
Presbyterians for Earth Care
River Alliance of Wisconsin
Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter
Straits of Mackinac Alliance
Waadookaawad Amikwag (Those Who Help Beaver)
Wisconsin Conservation Voters
Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network
(WECAN)
Wisconsin Ecolatinos
Wisconsin Green Muslims
Wisconsin Lakes
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

CC: National Transportation Safety Board