

OIL TRANSPORTATION IN THE GREAT LAKES

The overarching goal of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is no transportation of crude oil in, on, or under the Great Lakes. Whether by pipeline or vessel, a spill in the Great Lakes would be devastating to Michigan's natural resources, the health of our citizens, and our economy. Our position is based on a thorough examination of scientific literature and in-depth research of available documents and information.

VESSEL TRANSPORT

- Large quantities of crude oil move into or through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin every day. Six American and six Canadian refineries currently operate in the Great Lakes Basin and there are 25 refineries operating in the eight-state, two-province region.
- There has been a tremendous increase in crude oil production in recent years, particularly from the Bakken formation in North Dakota and from oil sands in Alberta, Canada. This includes an increase in shipment of diluted bitumen, a heavy semisolid form of petroleum also known as dilbit. This product has unique properties that affect its behavior if spilled, making traditional oil cleanup techniques ineffective.
- In 2013, a Wisconsin company proposed to establish a facility in western Lake Superior to ship crude oil by barges throughout the Great Lakes to Midwest refineries and markets beyond.
- In 2014, the first tank vessel to transport crude oil in the Great Lakes Basin traveled down the St. Lawrence River.
- According to the Coast Guard, adequate response methods and techniques do not currently exist to respond to spills of heavy oils in open bodies of freshwater such as the Great Lakes.

The Watershed Council advocates for a prohibition on the transportation of crude oil on tanker vessels and barges on the Great Lakes.

ENBRIDGE LINE 5

- Pipelines are considered to be the safest and most efficient way to transport oil and gas commodities.
- Line 5 is a 645 mile petroleum pipeline, owned and operated by Enbridge Energy, Limited Partnership, which runs from Superior, Wisconsin to Sarnia, Ontario. The line became operational in 1953 and carries up to 540,000 barrels or 22.7 million gallons of light crude oil, synthetic crude, and natural gas liquids per day.
- An incident or failure on Line 5 is considered to be a low-probability, high-consequence event. That means it does not have a high likelihood of occurring, but if it does occur, the impact can be catastrophic.
- The Watershed Council is unable to confirm the structural integrity of Line 5, due to the lack of access to information, particularly inline inspection report data.
- Currently, there is not sufficient capability to effectively respond to a failure on Line 5 in Northern Michigan, due to a lack of resources such as emergency response equipment and personnel, and situational conditions such as being located in remote areas or the open waters of the Great Lakes.

The Watershed Council advocates for the decommissioning of Enbridge Line 5.

Near-Term Actions

Recognizing the economic and political realities surrounding Line 5, we acknowledge that Line 5 will not be decommissioned in the near term. Therefore, we also need to prevent an oil spill and enhance preparedness capabilities to be able to effectively respond. The Watershed Council supports and is also advocating for the following near-term actions for Line 5 and pipeline safety nationwide:

- Independent analysis of inline inspection data to assess the structural integrity of the Line 5;
- Comprehensive and independent risk assessment and alternative analysis for the portion of Line 5 in the Straits of Mackinac;
- Increase emergency response capabilities in Northern Michigan, including stockpiling of equipment, training, and personnel.
- PHMSA reauthorization with meaningful amendments to improve pipeline safety; and
- Require approval of all spill response plans by the federal and state agencies responsible for responding to a spill, including the United States Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality;
- Implementation of recommendations made in the Michigan Petroleum Task Force Report;
- A pipeline water crossing survey to assess the risks of existing pipelines running under Michigan's rivers, streams, and lakes;
- Designation of the Great Lakes Basin as a High Consequence Area, subject to the Integrity Management Program.

As we see continued growth in oil production in North America, there will be more and more pressure to transport oil across Great Lakes waters. No method of transporting petroleum products can ever be completely safe and transporting greater volumes of oil will only serve to increase the risk to the Great Lakes ecosystem. We are working toward a day when no crude oil is transported in, on, or under the Great Lakes. Until that day comes, the Watershed Council will continue to work on a variety of fronts, including prevention measures, emergency response preparedness, education and outreach, and policy changes.



Adopted by the Watershed Council Board of Directors March 18, 2016.