



Comments on House Resolution 282

June 23rd, 2020

To: Chairman Gary Howell and Members of the Committee

RE: Opposition To House Resolution 282

On behalf of our 150,000 members and supporters in Michigan, the Sierra Club expresses our strong opposition to House Resolution 282.

Protecting the Great Lakes from pollution, destruction, and impairment is one of the most widely held, common values of all Michiganders. House Resolution 282 has been proposed at a time when every legislator should be strongly supporting our Michigan Attorney General in her efforts to protect this most precious resource from an increasingly likely disaster caused by Enbridge's failure to shut down the Line 5 dual oil pipelines in the wake of unexplained serious damage to at least one pipeline support in the Straits of Mackinac. The newest damage was found only when new, unexplained gaps in the coating of the 67-year-old pipeline were being repaired, and comes two years after an anchor strike damaged the pipelines in three spots.

Instead of standing up for protection of the Great Lakes, HR 282 has been introduced to distract attention from Enbridge's strategy of undermining the authority of the state of Michigan to protect our public trust, our waters, and the bottomlands of the Great Lakes. Through all prior administrations of either party, Michigan's elected leaders have vociferously defended our right to protect our state's Great Lakes bottomlands and to prevent devastating pollution. This is not the time for Michigan legislators to turn away from defending our right to protect our publicly held assets.

While it is not clear whether Enbridge ever intends to build this tunnel or if instead, they have simply dangled this idea as an attempt to delay the long-overdue shutdown of this dangerous pipeline, the company's history of misleading state officials and hiding information from regulators should give pause to anyone suggesting permitting for the tunnel be expedited. Michigan must first shut down the existing Line 5, then conduct a thorough, robust, and transparent process for considering any permit applications from Enbridge for this or any other pipeline work in Michigan. Even though Enbridge failed to submit a complete application to the state for this proposal, we already know that they propose to discharge 5 million gallons of contaminated wastewater a day into the waters of the Great Lakes if this proposal goes forward. They propose to destroy wetlands, potentially threaten breeding grounds for fisheries in the Straits, have not fully disclosed geological information about the proposed more than four-mile-long construction zone, and have not yet identified where huge amounts of materials from the digging would be disposed.

Let's also be clear, constructing a four-mile-long oil tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac won't keep the Great Lakes safe from Line 5. A tunnel will not protect us from spills along the other

640 miles of the 67-year-old pipeline. There have already been 33 oil spills along Line 5's 645-mile route. An oil tunnel will not protect the other 400 waterways in which the dangerous line crosses. Any spill near the North Shore of Lake Michigan, or any other major water crossings, would pose a threat almost as damaging as an oil spill in the Straits of Mackinac.

Michiganders cannot afford to allow a massive construction project like this be rushed through the environmental, economic, and other review processes. This is particularly true because Enbridge says they will give this tunnel to the state when it is done, potentially saddling Michigan with an enormous amount of liability from a poorly constructed oil tunnel.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote NO on House Resolution 282. Votes on this Resolution will be included in the Sierra Club's legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

Tim Minotas
Deputy Legislative and Political Director
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter