

NEWS RELEASE
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Shut down Line 5 now for damage assessment and risk analysis

SAULT STE. MARIE – Aaron Payment EdD, chairperson of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, called for the immediate and permanent shutdown of Enbridge Line 5 at the Straits for the second time in a week, over new revelations of pipeline damage from last week’s anchor strike.

“This damage shows the 65-year-old lines are too vulnerable to continue operating while the state drags its feet,” said Payment. “Obviously, aging infrastructure carrying oil under the sacred waters of the Straits is not a good idea, as we saw last week,” Payment said. “Now, Enbridge wants us to believe there is no concern with their dented pipes. Enbridge has a track record of repeated lies about safety issues. The Governor must immediately require Enbridge to cease the flow of oil through those suspect lines.”

On April 2, American Transmission Company reported a spill of some 400 gallons of cooling dielectric oils from damaged electric power cables running under the Straits. Challenging weather conditions and the condition of the cables meant it took two days to determine the actual location of the breaches, and it wasn’t until this week that the response action was able to determine that the problems were caused by a strike or drag of an anchor or anchors. Subsequent investigations led to a statement by Enbridge that several dents have been observed in both of the dual pipes in the vicinity of the cable breaches.

Governor Snyder has called for fast-tracking the risk analyses and moving forward with a tunnel option under the Straits. “This is the wrong lesson to be taking from this experience,” Payment said. “A tunnel will not solve the matter of the 90 miles of Line 5 that runs along the US-2 corridor within a mile or two of the Lake Michigan shoreline, where a breach could never be stopped before it reached Lake Michigan.

Investing in more carbon infrastructure is foolhardy, Payment said. “Furthermore, tunneling under the straits does not solve the issue of oil infrastructure becoming stranded assets as we move away from a carbon economy. We cannot put all our carbon reserves into the atmosphere if we are to survive, so we must start now to slow and then stop the flow of oil. Investing in more infrastructure is foolhardy, both economically and environmentally.”

Payment added, “These old pipes need to be shut off, at least until proper investigations and the full analyses are finished. Governor Snyder should not be using this accident as an excuse to fast-track a tunnel.”

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