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Ohio Chamber of Commerce CEO Urges Biden Administration to Keep Line 5 Operational

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Earlier this week, the White House Deputy Press Secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, stated that the Biden Administration is studying the impact of shutting down Enbridge’s Line 5. This statement came in response to Canada’s decision to invoke the 1977 Pipeline Transit treaty back in October amidst a long-running dispute over the operation of the pipeline.

“The Ohio Chamber of Commerce urges President Biden and Governor Whitmer to keep Enbridge Line 5 operational. Ohio businesses, employees and families depend on Line 5, and are counting on the operation of Line 5 and the construction of the Great Lakes Tunnel to protect local economies of the Great Lakes, all while keeping energy prices affordable for consumers,” said Ohio Chamber President and CEO Steve Stivers.

Enbridge’s Line 5 is an oil pipeline that rests on the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac and carries light crude oil, light synthetic crude and natural gas liquids. To ensure the safety of Lakes Michigan and Huron, a project was approved by former Michigan Governor, Rick Snyder, to allow Enbridge to create a tunnel to house the pipeline under the lakebed and prevent any environmental issues from occurring. After pushback from activists, the newly elected Governor Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel blocked the tunnel plans and sought to decommission Line 5 altogether.

“Americans are seeing huge price shocks at the pump and rising energy bills. Shuttering Line 5 would not only exacerbate this problem, but it will also be a major setback to domestic energy independence.”

Shutting down Line 5 would not only be devastating to Ohio and Michigan's economy, but it would also negatively affect the economy from a regional perspective. For decades, Line 5 has safely delivered over 500,000 barrels per day of crude supply to refineries in northwest Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Ontario. This represents approximately 42 percent of the regional refineries' crude manufacturing capacity. Without Line 5, the Midwest and Canada would face significant fuel supply constraints, which would likely result in significantly higher fuel costs and fuel availability concerns, as well as severe supply chain disruptions across various industries. Also, if the pipeline is taken offline, refineries could be forced to eliminate thousands of direct and indirect good-paying jobs.

With the invocation of the treaty, the Biden Administration will be forced into a bilateral negotiation process with the Canadian government. The treaty ensures the uninterrupted transport of petroleum products between the two countries and if either country fails to uphold their end of the treaty, the other country can request arbitration. Per the terms of the treaty, three arbitrators will be appointed, which could take place over the next several months.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce and its members are committed to supporting affordable, reliable energy that businesses across our state rely on, while ensuring that energy is transported in the most environmentally responsible way possible.

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