

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENERGY SECTOR

OIL AND GAS

White House: More pipelines under review

Mike Lee and Lesley Clark, E&E News reporters • Published: Friday, February 5, 2021



White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said during a briefing yesterday that President Biden's climate team is "looking at and assessing" oil and gas pipeline projects, including Enbridge Inc.'s Line 5 oil li in the Great Lakes states. Jim Lo Scalzo/UPI/Newscom

The Biden administration yesterday said it is reviewing a broad range of oil and gas pipelines, weeks after canceling a permit for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki discussed the review during a press briefing in response to a question about the president's views of Enbridge Line 5 in Michigan, which Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) has been pushing to shut down, and a separate oil project in Alaska.

"All of these pipelines are a part of what our climate team is looking at and assessing," she said.

The White House did not elaborate, and it wasn't clear from Psaki's remarks how many projects are under review or what steps the administration might take.

The White House last week issued an executive order directing the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that federal infrastructure spending and environmental permits consider the effects of climate change ([Energywire](#), Jan. 28). It also directs departments to consult with state, local and tribal officials during infrastructure reviews.

It's unclear how the executive order will apply to the Michigan pipeline, which is largely a state-level dispute. Whitmer is pressing Enbridge Inc. to remove an aging section of Line 5 that runs under the Straits of Mackinac. Enbridge is seeking to bore a tunnel near the existing oil line to hold a replacement pipe.

The Alaska project involves a proposed rail connection from the Canadian oil sands region to port facilities in Anchorage. Former President Trump in September issued a presidential permit for the line, which is required for facilities that cross international borders ([Energywire](#), Sept. 30, 2020).

Meanwhile, the Biden administration is under pressure from environmentalists and congressional Democrats to block more oil and gas infrastructure.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) sent a letter to the White House on Wednesday asking President Biden to order a broad review of another Enbridge oil project, the replacement and expansion of Line 3.

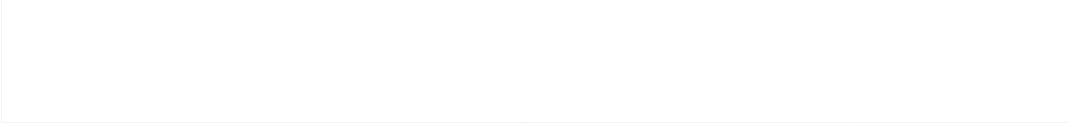
Omar's letter echoed requests from the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, which want Biden to overturn federal permits that the Army Corps of Engineers issued for the pipeline. They argue that the expanded pipeline will allow further development of the carbon-intensive oil sands in Canada, which will exacerbate climate change ([E&E News PM](#), Feb. 3).

"Climate change does not stop at the border of a reservation or a state or a country," Omar wrote.

Reporter Carlos Anchondo contributed.

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