

WI Jobs and Energy Coalition: Propane supplier warns Line 5 shut down could cause Wisconsin state of emergency

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 30, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, Wis – Recently released public comments include a major propane supplier warning the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that a Line 5 shut down could lead to regional propane shortages and price increases worse than the price increases and shortages that caused Wisconsin to declare a state of emergency nearly a decade ago.

“In the medium term, propane shortage induced price impacts would be expected to be much more severe and lasting than those experienced during the polar vortex induced shortages in the winter of 2013/14 that prompted several Midwestern states, including Wisconsin, to declare a state of emergency. Further to the economic impact, supply shortages pose a significant safety risk in winter as individuals may not have supply to heat their homes at any price,” wrote Sterling G. Koch, Vice President, Legal and Land of Plains Midstream Canada, in his March 2, 2022, comment letter.

The comment letter was submitted as part of the Wisconsin DNR’s public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Enbridge Line 5 Segment Relocation Project in northern Wisconsin. In addition to the warning, Koch notes that if the relocation project is denied – and Line 5 is shut down – Plains Midstream facilities in Sarnia (Ontario), Rapid River (Michigan) and Superior (Wisconsin) would be likely shut down, leading to propane supply issues throughout the Midwest and Eastern portions of the U.S.

The 2013-14 propane shortage mentioned in Koch's letter, caused all-time price highs for propane in the Midwest, and caused states like Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to declare states of emergency. The price hike also led to the federal government releasing hundreds of millions of dollars to try to help families heat their homes. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, about 12 percent, or 280,000, Wisconsin households use propane to heat their homes.

The full comment letter by Plains Midstream Canada is [attached](#).