

CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF OCTOBER 1, 2018

Integrity. Individual Attention. Precision Strategy. Proven Results



SNYDER, ENBRIDGE AGREE TO LINE 5 REPLACEMENT TUNNEL DEAL

Enbridge Energy agreed this week to pay for construction of a nearly four-mile long tunnel to house the controversial Line 5 oil pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac along with other utilities crossing the straits.

Gov. Rick Snyder and state officials said the change will reduce the risk of spill from the line. Opponents say the risk will still remain for the time it takes the tunnel to be built.

The agreement between the state and Enbridge includes a commitment from both to develop a public-private partnership to design and build the tunnel, which is estimated as costing as much as \$500 million. Although Enbridge will pay for the tunnel, the Mackinac Bridge Authority will own it and be responsible for providing the land for construction.

A separate negotiation between Enbridge and the Mackinac Bridge Authority is expected to be finalized before the end of the year. The shared “utility corridor” will be drilled 100 feet into bedrock below the lake bed, with construction taking as long as 10 years.

SCHUETTE MIGHT BACK DUGGAN IN FIGHT OVER NO-FAULT LAW

Attorney General and Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Schuette might be siding with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan’s lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Michigan’s no-fault auto insurance law and removing himself from defending the state’s insurance department.

Schuette may create a “conflict wall” to let other attorneys in his office represent the state agency in the lawsuit filed by Duggan at the U.S. District Court in Detroit in August. Duggan’s lawsuit argues that motorists in metro Detroit are deprived of due process because auto insurance in Michigan is not available at fair and equitable prices.

In a court filing on Monday, State Insurance Commissioner Patrick McPharlin said, “While a final decision has not yet been made, the Attorney General may take a position supporting the Plaintiffs’ position in this case.”

Schuette has previously voiced support for Duggan’s proposal to let drivers opt out of unlimited and expensive medical coverage for injuries sustained in auto accidents. Duggan is supporting Democrat Gretchen Whitmer in the race for governor in next month’s election.

HOUSE APPROVES ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION BILLS

The House unanimously passed legislation last week which would allow Michigan residents to register to vote online. Previously passed in the Senate, the measures should receive final procedural votes later in the year.

Under the proposed bills, residents with valid driver's licenses would be able to register to vote online by submitting voter registration applications on the secretary of state's website. Currently, residents must complete a form by hand and mail or deliver it to their local clerk in order to register to vote.

People without a valid driver's license or state identification card, and those who submit a change of address within the previous 10 days would not be able to register online.

The bills would also require the person who registered online, to vote in person the first time, and include security measures.

According to bill sponsor Rep. Julie Calley (R-Portland), "Thirty-eight other states and the District of Columbia have established online registration systems."

HOUSE APPROVES BAN ON POT-INFUSED ALCOHOL

Legislation to prohibit marijuana-infused alcoholic drinks in Michigan is heading to Gov. Rick Snyder's desk after the House approved the measure this week by a 101-4 vote.

The measure bans the use, possession and sale of marijuana-infused beer, wine, liquor and mixed drinks.

Proponents of the legislation say it is a pre-emptive measure in case voters legalize marijuana for recreational use next month.

MM&A BRIEFS

Former Chief Justice Thomas Brennan Dies

Thomas Brennan, 89, a former Michigan Supreme Court Justice and founder of Cooley Law School, has died.

The youngest justice to serve on the Supreme Court, Brennan was only 37 when he was elected to the Supreme Court in 1966. He resigned in 1973 to run what is now the Western Michigan University Cooley Law School. Brennan was president of the school for more than 20 years.

Brennan was also the 1982 Republican candidate for lieutenant governor with then Republican gubernatorial candidate Richard Headlee in an election won by Democrat James Blanchard.

More than 20,000 students have graduated from Cooley since 1972. Brennan also created a ranking system for law schools which has been used by the American Bar Association.

Leland Indicted for Bribery

Detroit Councilman Gabe Leland was indicted Thursday on charges of bribery – soliciting \$15,000 in cash bribes and free auto body work in exchange for a political favor involving his work on the council. Leland served in the House from 2005-10.

According to the federal grand jury indictment, Leland met with a business owner in May 2017 and discussed a \$15,000 payment in exchange for Leland's help to delay or prevent the city's sale of property which the business owner believed he owned.

He was charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States and concerting to own use property of another. He is also accused of directing a co-conspirator, Elisa Grubs, to meet with the business owner to collect \$7,500 cash for her to deliver as a partial payment. If convicted, Leland faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each bribery count and up to five years and a \$250,000 fine on the conspiracy count.

Calendar of Important Events

- Oct. 8 House Republican Campaign Committee Fundraiser
Location: 11:30 a.m., Detroit Athletic Club, Detroit
- Oct. 9 Rep. Tim Sneller (D-Burton) Fundraiser
Location: 5 p.m., Latina Italian Restaurant, Flint
- House Democratic Fund
Location: 6 p.m., Three Blind Mice Irish Pub, Mt. Clemens
- Oct. 14 Rep. Mary Whiteford (R-Casco Township) Fundraiser
Location: 2 p.m., Northshore Beach House, Saugatuck
- Oct. 15 Third-quarter campaign finance reports due for federal candidates
- Oct. 16 Rep. Beau LaFave (R-Iron Mountain) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Eagle Room, Island Resort & Casino, Harris
- Oct. 17 Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) Fundraiser
Location: 8 a.m., Grand Traverse Pie Company, Lansing
- Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) Fundraiser
Location: 6 p.m., Sedona Taphouse, Troy