

October 11, 2021

Destructive Green Energy Mandates Stifle Growth and Raise Prices

Gov. Whitmer's latest mandates are why Michiganders can't have nice things

By Jason Hayes

A new item on Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's agenda, the "MI New Economy" plan, offers three desirable outcomes: "Growing the Middle Class," "Supporting Small Business" and "Building Strong Communities." This plan will fail, though, because it puts a misguided and expensive green agenda ahead of the health and well-being of people.

One of the most effective ways of promoting a healthy middle class and ensuring that Michigan's small businesses thrive is by securing statewide access to reliable and affordable energy. But the governor's campaign against Line 5 and her increasingly restrictive climate policies will keep Michigan residents out of the "vibrant communities" and away from the "kinds of services and amenities associated with a high standard of living" she envisions.

Though the Line 5 pipeline provides 55% of the propane used across the state, the governor wants to see it closed to avoid the potential of an oil spill in the Great Lakes. Enbridge, the company that owns and operates Line 5, has already committed to move the pipeline to a protective, cement-lined tunnel, 100 feet below the lakebed. Building the tunnel would safeguard almost 34,000 jobs across the region and encourage \$20.8 billion in economic activity.

That's just the sort of project that could bolster small businesses and expand the ranks of the middle class. But the governor has ignored appeals from elected officials, businesses, unions, and trade associations across the political spectrum and on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. Her administration has done everything in its power to close Line 5 and slow-walk the permitting processes required to approve the tunnel's construction.

The governor has also signed an executive directive that mandates the state achieve net-zero CO2 emissions by 2050. State regulators responded by directing utilities "to complete modeling scenarios that assist the state of Michigan in achieving economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2050."

But meeting the governor's carbon neutrality policy ensures that Michigan travels down the same road as California and Texas. That's a serious problem because, as California moves away from nuclear and fossil fuels

Summary

The MI New Economy, a recent addition to Gov. Whitmer's priorities, promises good things. But it puts an expensive and failed green agenda ahead of needs of people.

Main text word count: 684



Abundant, reliable and affordable electricity is a key to prosperity.

toward solar, instability has weakened its grid and resulted in an increasing number of electricity shortages and blackouts.

Texas experienced similar instability this February during a severe winter storm. A decade-long plan by regulators there has shuttered coal plants, put off upgrades that protect the grid from extreme weather, and built thousands of heavily subsidized wind turbines. This all ensured the state's increasingly fragile grid could not meet rapid spikes in demand during the extreme cold. As a result, millions of Texas residents endured rolling blackouts for several days.

Deliberately designing those same weakness into Michigan's electric grid will expose Michiganders to even more inconsistent and expensive electricity service than they already endure.

The governor's plan also calls for expanding the use of electric vehicles, which will further stress our electric grid. She just announced another initiative to promote EVs by subsidizing more charging infrastructure, and two state government agencies are collaborating to build the first mile of electrified roadway to charge EVs as they travel.

This latest misuse of tax dollars surfs the same failed wave as solar roads and should remind readers that, just as government has no business building gas stations with taxpayer money, neither should it build EV charging infrastructure. Government largesse supporting politically preferred technologies gives bureaucrats the power to make spending decisions with your tax dollars that private individuals and industry should be making with their own dollars.

Whitmer defends her extravagant plan as a set of "strong but attainable goals, backed by data." But this canard falls back on the same tired "science and data" trope she repeatedly used to justify her unscientific and illegal extensions of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Her latest plan will keep businesses from providing the services we expect in modern day America. Shuttering reliable and affordable energy options, while mandating and subsidizing unreliable green energy and transportation, will enrich a small number of green companies. But it will stifle growth everywhere else, including in the middle class. The governor's destructive green energy policies are exactly the reason why so many Michiganders can't have nice things.

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