

# Where He Stands: *Protecting Our Environment*



**M**ichigan's natural resources are a gift from God that must be preserved for future generations. Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen.

## **I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of pollution.**

In July 2010, an Enbridge pipeline in Calhoun County ruptured. The company failed to shut the pipeline down for more than 18 hours. More than a million gallons of highly corrosive tar sands oil leaked into the Kalamazoo River and continued downstream for more than 24 miles.

It was the second largest inland oil spill in U.S. history. In my medical practice, I treated patients who had been affected by the aromatic hydrocarbons released into the atmosphere during that disaster. More than a billion dollars were spent to clean up that disaster.



## **So do I take environmental protection seriously?**

*You bet I do!* I helped bring hundreds of

thousands of dollars to our area to upgrade the water treatment facility in Albion. I have also met with numerous state and federal officials about how we can prevent another oil spill. Enbridge's Line 5 under the Straits of Mackinac is a great concern to me. That pipeline is more than 44 years old and recent work has left some of the pipeline without a protective coating in some areas. A major break in Line 5 would be catastrophic for our state leading to billions of dollars in damage.

**Enbridge has not been a good steward** of our environment. According to a report by *mLive*: "Enbridge has spilled oil 1,068 times across the company footprint between 1999 and 2013, totaling 7.4 million gallons. A different section of Line 5 had a bad spill about fifteen years ago, when about 220,000 gallons of oil and natural gas liquids fouled an Iron County marsh in 1999."

**I am not satisfied with the answers given by Enbridge** in recent months regarding Line 5, some of which have been less than truthful. We must demand better, independent oversight of this pipeline. Ultimately, if Enbridge cannot live up to our high standards for safety and honesty, the pipeline should be closed. I am not willing to risk our state's most treasured recreation area to one oil pipeline. All options for transporting that oil safely should be explored. Michigan's Attorney General has looked at various alternatives, and continuous monitoring

is one possible option. But we must be vigilant and make sure that our precious natural resources are protected.

**At the same time,** we need to make sure that government policy regarding the environment is fair. Homeowners who are selling their property shouldn't be subject to overly burdensome regulations at the time of transfer, particularly if there has been no

history of problems in the past. We can – and should – show respect to property rights.

**The Flint Water Crisis is another example** of how important environmental safety is to our citizens. The ill-considered switchover from Detroit public water to Flint River water was a disaster driven by mistakes at every level of government – local, state and federal. The Flint City Commission, which voted for the switchover, actually celebrated together when that switch was made. Only later was it discovered that vital pipeline coating chemicals were omitted from the water treatment system, leading to pipe corrosion and lead contamination. There is plenty of blame to go around, and several people have been charged with crimes by our state's Attorney General.

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*Dr. Bizon believes that environmental safety and economic growth can go hand-in-hand when all parties work together on common-sense solutions that keep bureaucratic burdens to a minimum.*

**Lead in drinking water is concern far beyond Flint.** A recent mLive report found elevated levels of lead in 70 Michigan communities, from small towns and mobile home parks to cities and apartment complexes. Lead exposure can seriously impact a child’s ability to learn and grow cognitively. Your family’s health must be safeguarded against toxins in the environment.

**The lesson for us in Senate District 19** (Barry, Calhoun and Ionia counties) is this: We must have better oversight of our public water supply. We cannot permit a “single point of failure” to lead to another Flint-like disaster anywhere in Michigan. I’m not satisfied that all of the needed changes in state law and local water management have been made. I will continue to raise this issue – and demand honest answers – for as long as I’m in office.

**Balancing environmental safety with economic growth** is both possible and necessary. Working with all levels of government, including local boards, as well as private industry, citizen groups and farms, we can keep our environment healthy without damaging our economy. When we work together on common sense solutions, everyone benefits.

**Your input matters to me.** To use the comments box on our website, go to [www.BizonforMichiganSenate.com](http://www.BizonforMichiganSenate.com). Or visit our Facebook page at [#bizonformichigansenate](https://www.facebook.com/bizonformichigansenate).

