The Canadian Advocate is a monthly roundup of AEM’s ongoing advocacy efforts in Canada. Our industry supports over 149,000 good paying jobs in Canada and contributes $45 billion a year to the national economy. With over 100 member companies in Canada and growing, AEM is actively engaging lawmakers in Ottawa and throughout the provinces to advocate for policies helping equipment manufacturers succeed in Canada and around the world.

AEM Advocates on Line 5 Pipeline Issue

AEM has written to the Chair of the House of Commons Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States, MP Raj Saini of Kitchener Centre in Ontario, urging him and his colleagues to ensure that Line 5’s operation—which supplies almost half of Canadian crude oil and natural gas to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec—is not interrupted.

The 65-year-old Enbridge Line 5 pipeline carries 540,000 barrels of Canadian crude oil and other petroleum products per day across Wisconsin and Michigan to Sarnia, Ontario. This accounts for almost half of the supply of light crude oil, synthetic crude oil, and natural gas liquids to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer calls the pipeline “a ticking time bomb,” given that it crosses the Straits of Mackinac that link Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Enbridge has stated that the pipeline is safe and has also committed to build a new tunnel to protect the line under the lakebed.

Line 5 is the only pipeline that supplies propane to Southern Ontario. In the event of a shutdown, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that up to 2,000 tanker trucks or 800 railcars a day would be needed to absorb the displaced product. This would lead to higher GHG emissions, shipping costs, and congestion for Canadian and U.S. commuters. Both Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources and the Canadian-American Business Council maintain that a shutdown would cause a propane shortage of more than 750,000 gallons per day in Michigan.

Despite Michigan Governor Whitmer’s deadline of May 12 for a shutdown, Enbridge has vowed to keep the oil moving even and would only cease if ordered by the regulator. Canada’s Natural Resources Minister Seamus O’Regan has stated that ensuring Line 5 stays operational is “non-negotiable.”

AEM Scores Win on CNESST Regulatory Issue in Quebec

Following AEM’s efforts with the Quebec Business Council, the CNESST (Worker’s Compensation Board) has decided not to pursue the regulatory changes regarding machine safety issues at this time. The proposed regulations would have required an engineer to certify modifications on equipment that does not have a Type C standard.

Yet, what constituted an engineer had not been well defined, nor what would constitute a substantial modification.

AEM will continue to monitor for any recurrence of proposed changes, which would require another round of consultations with partners and stakeholders.
Members of Parliament and Senators return (in most cases, virtually) to Ottawa for the final stretch of sitting in the month of June before the summer recess. The key legislative measure the government is looking to pass is Bill C-30, the implementation bill for its 2021 budget. The Senate is undertaking a “pre-study” of the bill before it reaches the Upper Chamber in order to speed its passage. To date, the bill is at Second Reading in the House of Commons and will still require committee study and Third Reading before it can reach the Senate, if approved. We can expect the government to prioritize its passage, but in a minority parliament, the Liberals will require the support of at least one major opposition party to move it forward.

AEM is also continuing to follow other notable legislation, including private members Bill C-272, “right to repair” legislation from Cambridge Ontario MP Bryan May. This bill proposes to amend the Copyright Act to allow the circumvention of a technological protection measure in a computer program if the circumvention is solely for the purpose of diagnosis, maintenance or repair of a product in which the program is embedded. It also allows the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, renting and provision of technologies, devices, or components used for diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of such products. Given the chance for a summer or fall election, it remains unlikely that this private members bill will make it through Parliament to receive Royal Assent.

Finally, AEM is also poised to appear as a witness at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for its upcoming study on “Environmental Impact of Agriculture.” Given the Precision Agriculture study that AEM released earlier this year, our members are in a good position to offer testimony to help shape this committee study and eventual report.

That’s all for this month. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact Alex Russ at aruss@aem.org or call (202) 898-9006.

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