

Michigan

## Buoy will monitor currents near Enbridge's controversial Mackinac straits oil pipeline



Enbridge Inc. and Michigan Tech University have partnered on a water current monitoring buoy that will be deployed in the Straits of Mackinac in Aug. 2015. (Courtesy | MTU)



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**STRAITS OF MACKINAC** -- A new Upper Great Lakes Observing System buoy will be anchored in the Straits of Mackinac to monitor currents in the area of a controversial oil pipeline.

Michigan Technological University's Great Lakes Research Center (GLRC) will install the yellow buoy in partnership with Enbridge Inc., which operates a twin oil pipeline under the straits that's been the **focus of intense public scrutiny**.

Until now, there has been limited real-time measurement of water movements in the heavily-traveled waterway where Lake Huron and Lake Michigan meet, said Guy Meadows, GLRC director.

"This buoy... will give us additional data to enhance our legacy of safe operations that dates back for more than 60 years," said Dave Hoffman, senior manager of research, development and innovation for Enbridge Pipelines.

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The new buoy will be equipped with standard weather and wave sensors and an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler that measures the water flow with downward focused sound waves. The buoy will measure the magnitude and direction of currents at one-meter intervals from near the surface to the bottom.

The buoy will also measure wind direction and speed, wind gust speed, air temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure, solar radiation, water temperature, wave height and direction.

"We will now be able to verify the predictions of the very complex flows through the Straits of Mackinac with real-time data," said Meadows. "It will also enable us to verify our new numerical hydrodynamic model of the combined Lakes Michigan and Huron."

The buoy is being assembled in Houghton and should be deployed this month west of the bridge on the U.P. side of the Straits in about 100 feet of water.

Once in operation, the data will be displayed on the GLRC's UGLOS website and updated every 10 minutes. All data will be accessible to the public at <http://uglos.mtu.edu>.

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