Environmentalists list goals for Whitmer administration

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Environmental groups in Michigan are asking for increased attention to their concerns during the Gov. Gretchen Whitmer administration. Late last week, a coalition of five state environmental groups released their “2019-2022 Environmental Roadmap,” a collection of goals they hope will influence the decisions new state government leaders make during their terms.

Those five groups include the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, Michigan Environmental Council, We the People of Detroit, Lean & Green Michigan and National Wildlife Federation, although material from those groups states that they said they fielded input from more than 20 organizations to come up with their goals, including the Petoskey-based Tip of the Mitt

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Gov. Whitmer, who campaigned on promises to shut down Line 5, has already asked Attorney General Dana Nessel to examine the legality of Snyder’s end-of-term actions on Line 5. A report on those findings is still forthcoming.

The roadmap also focuses on rolling back other lame-duck session measures. For example, one bullet point calls on officials to bring “Michigan’s wetlands protection program, in line with federal minimum standards.”

Michigan, which has some of its own authority to enforce the Clean Water Act through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, has already taken some steps outside the bounds of federal regulations on wetlands protection. But those protections were threatened even further when a bill proposed by state Sen. Tom Casperson, R-Escombay, proposed slashing the number of wetlands that would be protected under the state’s framework. By the time of passage, legislators had dramatically scaled back on the bill, but opponents said it still...
Northern Michigan.
Animosity over the petroleum pipeline — particularly the 65-year-old underwater portion crossing the Straits of Mackinac — has been escalating for years and was exacerbated at an ever-increasing rate as former Gov. Rick Snyder drew closer to his final days in office. In one of his final acts, he cleared the way for the current Straits section of the pipeline to be replaced and housed inside a utility tunnel built into the bedrock below the lake bottom.

The 15-page "roadmap" only refers to "pipelines" a total of three times. But in one instance, it calls on the administration to file a legal action against Line 5 to have it decommissioned within the first 100 days. Beyond that, it calls on the administration to follow the goals outlined by the now-defunct Pipeline Safety Advisory Board subcommittee at the end of last year to tighten regulations.

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Other parts of the policy agenda call for continued incentives to reduce reliance on nonrenewable resources, an increased reliance on clean energy, and the acquisition of public lands, especially in southern, urban parts of the state.

"On Nov. 6, the people of Michigan took their priorities to the ballot box and voted for leaders who will address our state's drinking water crises, protect our Great Lakes, combat climate change, and position our state to be a leader in clean energy," said Lisa Wozniak, executive director of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, in a press release.

Full text of the document can be found online at michiganlcv.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=5476c211c91436e9453db35bd78bcf