

Rick Snyder: Trump wrong about Gordie Howe Bridge

Rick Snyder

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Last night, my wife and I had a quiet evening watching Olympic highlights, including some incredible Michigan skaters. The quiet was quickly shattered by President Donald Trump's announcement that he might stop the opening of the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Since I played a significant role in the bridge project, my phone and email have been flooded with media inquiries. I have generally kept a low profile over the past few years, but this topic merits a few comments.



Most responses to the president's comments have been in favor of the GHIB, asking him not to stop the opening. These statements are well thought out and on point.

Instead of a similar statement, let me take a nerdier approach and analyze the key underlying points in his Truth Social post and important historical background.

In Trump's Truth Social post, he says:

- "They (Canada) own both the Canada and the United States sides." This is incorrect.

Canada and the state of Michigan are 50/50 owners of the new bridge. Canada was wonderful and financed the entire bridge. They will get repaid with interest from the tolls. Michigan and the United States got their half-ownership with no investment. That is a great deal.

- "(It was) built with virtually no U.S. content." This is incorrect.

There was a waiver of the Buy America Act for the actual bridge part of the construction project. Why? Because half the bridge is in Canada. Buy American should not apply to a project that is half outside our country. The workers and materials for the bridge construction have come from both countries. The U.S. customs plaza and the Michigan-side approach to work have been built with U.S. materials and workers, just as the Canadian equivalents have been built with Canadian resources.



- "China will terminate all ice hockey in Canada and eliminate the Stanley Cup." This is very doubtful.

In fact, there is a big game tonight between the U.S. and Canada women's teams. I believe hockey will continue to thrive in both countries, and there is no better name than the Gordie Howe International Bridge for this project.

- "The Tariffs Canada charges us for our Dairy products have, for many years, been unacceptable, putting our Farmers at great financial risk." This is a legitimate concern.

It has been a problem since before I was governor, and it should be addressed by federal representatives from both countries.

- "We (U.S.) should own, perhaps, at least one half of this asset." We do already!

There are a few other items to note. You may wonder who loses if the GHIB is delayed or stopped:

- Obviously, Canada. They have a huge investment in the bridge.
- U.S. and Canadian companies. The Ambassador Bridge has hindered commerce for decades and increased costs for manufacturing operations. The GHIB will solve these problems and provide for faster economic growth on both sides.
- U.S. and Canadian workers. The GHIB will create new jobs in logistics and other areas on both sides.
- U.S. and Canadian consumers. The added costs of suffering due to the Ambassador Bridge issues are added to the cost of our goods and services.

For each of these last points, given the size of each country's economy, the negative impacts of a bridge delay are felt much more on the U.S. side. Overall, U.S. citizens would be the largest losers in a bridge delay or stoppage.

If the GHIB is delayed or stopped, there actually is one big winner: The Moroun family and the Ambassador Bridge Company. Over the decades, they have spent millions trying to stop the GHIB. Why? Every day, they make much more money at our expense.

In 2012 alone, they spent more than \$30 million on a ballot proposal to prevent construction of the GHIB. For years, they have had active lobbyists in Lansing and Washington trying to sabotage this project. They have also made very large political contributions in both places.

President Trump, I would encourage you to challenge your advisers and the sources for your post to correct the information they have provided. The GHIB is a great deal for America that I hope you will be proud of. We have some issues with Canada that should be negotiated. But picking this bridge as the leverage point doesn't seem to make the

most sense given your other tools. The bridge stoppage approach would primarily harm Americans.

To my friends in Canada, thank you for financing the GHIB and for many other areas of friendship. Canada has been a stalwart partner on this massive project through multiple governments on both sides of the Detroit River. It is a big win-win for all of us. I am a strong believer that our mutual friendship is important to the world, although I will be rooting for the U.S. women tonight in hockey. Hockey is still hockey!

Rick Snyder is a former governor of Michigan.