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PRESS RELEASE

Environmental Groups Reach Settlement with DEP on Mariner East 2 Appeal to Forge Stronger Environmental Protections

Harrisburg, PA (July 27, 2018) - In a victory for community safety and environmental protection, Clean Air Council, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Mountain Watershed Association reached a settlement agreement on Thursday around the Mariner East 2 Pipelines with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The settlement resolves an appeal of construction-related permits for Sunoco Pipeline L.P.'s (Sunoco) Mariner East 2 pipeline project that has been pending before the Environmental Hearing Board (EHB) for nearly a year and a half.

The environmental organizations reached an agreement with DEP to create and enhance protective policies to address the public health and the environmental impacts from pipeline projects. This agreement will also lead to increased transparency, better access to permit application materials, additional opportunities for public participation, and improved communication with impacted residents along project routes. A new stakeholder group will be created, including environmental organizations, to collaborate on best practices to reduce harms from pipeline construction.

Mariner East 2 consists of two large-diameter pipelines that would carry highly volatile hazardous liquids at very high pressure 350 miles across Pennsylvania to be shipped for sale overseas. In February 2017, Clean Air Council, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Mountain Watershed Association appealed DEP's decision to issue permits to Sunoco to construct the Mariner East 2 pipelines. Within half a year of the appeal, the EHB preliminarily determined that Sunoco's horizontal directional drilling (HDD) activity imperiled the environment, and it temporarily shut down all permitted activity at every HDD site across the Commonwealth. The groups reached a partial agreement last summer that resulted in significant improvements to Sunoco's plans for construction of the rest of the pipelines. Nonetheless, when Sunoco was allowed to resume construction, sinkholes opened up in residents' backyards, and Sunoco's HDD practices have so far resulted in over 180 separate spills of drilling fluid - an industrial waste and pollutant - into Pennsylvania land and waters.

“This settlement marks the successful resolution of just one part of the many issues with the destructive Mariner East pipelines,” said Joseph Otis Minott, Executive Director and Chief Counsel of Clean Air Council. “There are many other issues that still must be addressed. Due to the negligence and carelessness of Sunoco in constructing these pipelines, opposition to the Mariner East pipelines is accelerating and the Council, its partners, and the many residents that have been harmed by these pipelines will continue to strongly resist them.”

“Sunoco has been among the worst actors in the pipeline industry but they are by no means alone. The mass proliferation of pipelines being allowed to cut through our forests, creeks, private properties, public lands, and communities is inflicting tremendous and irreparable harm,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. “This agreement is an important step towards protection, but what is really needed is for Pennsylvania to end the practice of fracking for gas from shale in the state.”

“The devastation that Sunoco caused is indefensible and should never have occurred,” said Melissa Marshall, Community Advocate for Mountain Watershed Association. “This settlement is a critical first step towards preventing tragedies such as those we’ve seen with Mariner East 2 from ever happening to anyone again.”