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Atlantic Sunrise Opponents to Wolf, DEP: Reject the Permits in Light of Mariner East 2 Debacle

Groups Cite Regulatory Rush to Issue ME2 Permits and Failure to Address Resulting 61+ Spills

Harrisburg, PA – For opponents of Williams Partners' proposed Atlantic Sunrise pipeline, the call for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to reject a pair of water quality permits has become even more urgent in the wake of revelations regarding Sunoco's Mariner East 2 pipeline. Twenty-six organizations and small local businesses submitted a letter <http://bit.ly/2eMk1Lp> to DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell citing more regulatory failures coming to light in the wake of a series of spills that have contaminated an aquifer, an Exceptional Value Stream, and over a dozen drinking water supplies and calling on DEP to provide the protection they failed to provide to communities along the Mariner East 2 route by rejecting the permits for the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline.

This second letter comes on the heels of large public dissent and comment at last month's DEP public hearings for Atlantic Sunrise Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 water permits; growing resistance camps established along sections of the 200 mile pipeline route; and concerned residents supporting landowners along the route being faced with eminent domain court proceedings.

The DEP issued the permits for the Mariner East 2 pipeline on February 13, days after concerned groups met with Secretary Patrick McDonnell to request additional time to review and comment on Sunoco's response to hundreds of deficiencies the agency had cited in September of last year. Although many deficiencies remained unresolved when the company resubmitted its application in December, McDonnell denied the community group's request and issued the permits days later. These same deficiency issues and concerns were made by community members for the Atlantic Sunrise at the 102 and 105 public hearings held last month. In fact, after these public hearings, DEP sent a third round of [deficiency letters](#) to Transco on July 11th, acknowledging the unresolved deficiencies yet again. "If the permits for

the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline are issued, residents near construction will experience the same impacts as those in Chester County and along the entire route of the Mariner East II” said Sierra Shamer, Shalefield Organizing Committee.

“An expert review by Schmid and Co. of Williams’ water applications for Schuylkill County alone found glaring deficiencies in the AS applications including: missing private water supply wells and springs; no recent "existing use" determinations for affected streams; direct impacts proposed for Exceptional Value (EV) wetlands that have not been avoided nor minimized, and wetlands along wild trout streams not accurately classified as EV by Williams, to name just a few of the deficiencies for just one of the counties along the proposed AS route. Some of these same deficiencies were cited with the Mariner 2 pipeline now wreaking havoc to landowners and streams during pipeline construction,” said Faith Zerbe, Director of Monitoring, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

Residents of West Whiteland Township in Chester County started noticing problems with their well water just before the July 4th holiday. They had not been informed by the company or the DEP that the aquifer had been punctured during construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline on June 22nd. *StateImpact PA* has found that at least 61 spills occurred between April and June for Mariner East 2. The DEP failed to make the public aware of the spills and to take action to stop the company from doing further damage. Senator Andy Dinniman (D-19) and Representatives Chris Quinn (R-168), Leanne Krueger-Braneky (D-161), and Carolyn Comitta (D-156) have called for a halt to all construction on that pipeline.

“The mission statement of the DEP is ‘to protect Pennsylvania’s air, land and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment,’ but it is clear that the cumulative impacts of the Atlantic Sunrise project will cause massive environmental degradation and put citizens in harm’s way,” said Ann Pinca, President of Lebanon Pipeline Awareness. “The DEP cannot approve these permits without directly violating its own mission statement.”

“Fossil fuels have left legacy contamination and polluted waterways in Pennsylvania we are still cleaning up with taxpayer money long after the industry is gone. It’s time we look to the future and invest in sustainable and renewable jobs, not more fracking and pipeline build outs that will lock us into harmful climate trapping exploitation for decades to come, said Leah Zerbe, Co-Founder, Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness. “We urge Secretary McDonnell and the Governor to finally stand up for Pennsylvania families and the environment and deny the Atlantic Sunrise permits,” said Leah Zerbe, Co-Founder, Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness.

“This letter represents a vote of no confidence in the DEP by the organizations represented. Unfortunately, those of us who have dealt with the agency for years on matters related to shale gas development are not at all surprised by the agency’s poor handling of its permitting authority and its lack of both proper oversight and transparency once problems surfaced. This isn’t the first time we’ve seen similar issues, but we’re calling on Governor Wolf and Secretary McDonnell to make it the last. DEP has an obligation to serve the best interests of the public

and that means they must deny the permits for the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline,” said Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth.

“DEP needs to make sure that its review of the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline is thorough and independent of political pressure. The rush to approve the Mariner 2 pipeline is a clear example of why DEP needs to fully assess the potential risks and significant damage that these large scale pipeline are causing to Pennsylvania,” stated Myron Arnowitt, Pennsylvania Director for Clean Water Action.

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