

*****For Immediate Release*****

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Berks, Schuylkill Residents Call on Future Power PA to Abandon Pipeline Plans

Affected Landowners Were Blindsided by Vague Letter Seeking Permission to Survey for New Pipeline

Landowners in the path of a newly-proposed 20 mile pipeline expressed their concerns in a letter to Future Power PA, the subsidiary of Canada-based EmberClear that plans to build the line to connect the Texas Eastern pipeline in Berks County to the Good Springs natural gas power plants they plan to build in Schuylkill County. They are calling on the company to abandon its plans for the pipeline. Among their chief concerns is the way they were notified that a new pipeline was planned to cut through their properties.

Affected landowners received a letter last week from a company called United Field Services, Inc. requesting permission to survey their properties. Included with the letter was a consent form the recipients were asked to sign and return. Because they had received no notice from Future Power PA and because several of them already have easement agreements with Sunoco for a 50-year old hazardous liquids line, several landowners assumed the letter referred to work to be done on the Sunoco line.

“Pipelines inflict a high level of damage on our communities, our ecosystems, our waterways and on future generations, including in the form of climate change. There is no excuse for a pipeline company to be so cavalier about the damage it is about to inflict as to

ignore even ensuring the public is aware of what is barreling down upon us. This pipeline will be challenged by the communities and organizations who care about our present and future generations and understand the devastation pipelines bring,” said **Maya van Rossum**, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

“Just the fact that Future Power PA, LLC (EmberClear) chose not to contact us about this project beforehand and allowed a survey company to send a deceptive letter for consent to survey proves to me that their agenda is not going to benefit us, the landowners impacted by this proposal. Most of the neighbors that I have spoken to assumed that it was just going to be work on the existing pipeline owned by Sunoco and never questioned the letter,” said **Cathy Wolfe**, affected landowner in Jefferson Township, Berks County.

The letter signed by affected landowners and environmental advocates cites several concerns with the project beyond how it was announced. Intrastate pipelines are virtually unregulated in Pennsylvania, so the typical concerns landowners have about property rights, safety, and property values are amplified. In the case of this pipeline, the idea of co-locating a new natural gas pipeline with a 50-year old hazardous liquids line only amplifies those concerns more.

“I remember when the Sunoco pipeline cut across our family farm when I was a young boy. My father, a dairy farmer, was opposed to the pipeline running across his land or his neighbor’s lands but was told the pipeline would be installed despite his opposition. The same bully tactics are being used now to dupe landowners in thinking they have no rights to protect their land and their families from these gas pipeline corporations. I will not sign off to allow this company to cut across our fourth generation family farm and I also do not want the same harm done to my neighbors – there is too much risk involved.”

John Zerbe II, Washington Township, Schuylkill County landowner.

“The Sunoco line a mile east of our farm is around 50 years old. I can remember several times when they had to dig it up to repair leaks. It makes no sense to put a new natural gas line near an old petroleum products line. Sounds like a recipe for disaster to me,” said **James Hepler**, Eldred Township, Schuylkill County landowner.

“I’m concerned about the construction of another pipeline carrying potentially flammable/explosive materials right next to an existing 50-year old pipeline that could be damaged during construction and of losing more of my land to another easement that prevents us from doing anything on that portion of our property,” said **Wolfe**.

“Many people don’t realize that intrastate pipelines are virtually unregulated, yet the same problems that occur on big interstate pipelines can happen on shorter pipelines that

branch off of them. Pipelines make bad neighbors," said **Karen Feridun**, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.

The letter raises broader concerns about the path of the pipeline and what environmental impacts it may have on natural resources in its path.

"Gasoline, plus coal, plus natural gas--do you have any idea the type of pollution this will bring to an already cancer-laden Schuylkill County? I'm all for creating jobs, but not like this," said **Leah Zerbe**, member of Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness.

"EmberClear wants Schuylkill and Berks Counties to house a whole new portfolio of polluting industries, from reopened coal mines and power plants to gas pipelines and a gas liquids processing facility. So far, EmberClear seems altogether uninterested in what the people who are living there actually have to say about these projects," said **Joseph Otis Minott**, Esq., Executive Director of the Clean Air Council, a non-profit dedicated to protecting everyone's right to breathe clean air. "What will the cumulative impacts of these six projects be on the environmental and human health of the area? There are many questions that EmberClear has yet to answer."

Direct link to letter to Future Power PA and sample letter received by landowners:

<http://www.gastruth.org/?p=2137>

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