



News Update: Comment Period on Brandywine Pipeline Crossing Extended.

In a letter issued May 31, 2012, the Pennsylvania DEP agreed to extend the public comment period and to grant a public hearing the applications submitted for the proposed Transco Pipeline crossing of the East Branch Brandywine Creek and tributary streams. The date for the public hearing and the end of the comment period were not provided, but PA DEP did say it presumed some time in July.

Thanks to everyone who submitted a letter requesting this extension and the hearing. It made a difference.

Stay tuned for more information on how you can comment substantively on this precedent setting project.

Background:

Transcontinental Gas and Pipeline Company ("Transco") is seeking permits to "open trench cut" the East Branch Brandywine Creek, Ludwigs Run and an unnamed tributary in order to lay pipeline for a proposed upgrade. The scope of this construction activity and stream crossings will have a deleterious effect on the water resources of the Brandywine Creek and Delaware River Basin. An extended public comment period and public hearing are needed. Please join us in urging the PA DEP to give the public the time and the hearing that are necessary to fully vet this controversial and damaging proposal.

Transco is refusing to implement horizontal direct drilling to mitigate the detrimental environmental impacts on the waterbodies, even though Transco itself recognizes that such a method is a viable option and in the past PADEP demanded that Transco use this less damaging approach. Transco's only arguments against using such a method are cost and time. The "open cut" stream crossing method that Transco plans on utilizing is associated with significant sedimentation problems, as the construction activity commences in the stream as it is flowing. Also, much of the right of way in which the construction will take place is atop extremely steep slopes, up to 35-40% gradient, which makes the area particularly vulnerable to sediment and erosion problems from rain events. The open cut approach will clearly adversely affect stream habitat and water quality.