

For Immediate Release:

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**Environmental Groups Urge PADEP to Deny Warehouse Stormwater Permits
Proposed to Discharge into Exceptional Value Waters**

Monroe County, Tunkhannock Township & Coolbaugh Township, PA: Following the April 24th, 2023 dual evening public hearings, requested by conservation groups, and held by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection (PADEP) on two new warehouse/distribution centers proposed for Exceptional Value watersheds in Monroe County, groups secured an extension of comment for one warehouse, Papillon and Moyer I80-115 C-1 Site, LLC, application through the environmental justice office of PADEP. PennFuture, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Tobyhanna Creek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association submitted additional joint comments to the PADEP today. The comment period for the Moyer Papillon NPDES stormwater discharge application (PAD450168) for the construction of 6 separate land development projects, including a proposed 750,000 square foot warehousing/distribution center space (with 727 parking spaces) and other commercial uses on an existing 98-acre forested area, closes this Thursday. The applicant is proposing to discharge stormwater runoff into Mud Pond Run and its associated wetlands, an Exceptional Value resource. In 2020, despite local opposition from residents, the Tunkhannock Township supervisors voted to rezone the parcel, and an adjacent parcel from open space wetlands (OS-W) to General Commercial (C-2) to allow for the mega-warehouse project.

Additional comments from the public for this Papillon and Moyer warehouse/distribution application can be emailed to Colleen Connolly, DEP Regional Communications Manager, coconnolly@pa.gov through COB Thursday May 25th. As of noon today, according to Delaware Riverkeeper Network, over 600 people have written into the PADEP through their website action center alone opposing the Papillon and Moyer discharge application. The NPDES application materials under review by PADEP can be viewed here: [RegionalResources/NERO/NEROPortalFiles/CommunityInformation/I-80-115_C1/PAD450168](https://www.padep.com/RegionalResources/NERO/NEROPortalFiles/CommunityInformation/I-80-115_C1/PAD450168).

Conservation groups also submitted extensive comments for PADEP to deny the Orchard BJK Lot 1 warehouse in Coolbaugh Township and local group opposition is strongly opposing this second warehouse project. Public comments to PADEP for the state NPDES application were due May 10th, 2023 (see below for link to conservation group comments). If PADEP approves, according to the applicant, the project would consist of a 333,000 square foot warehouse on 36 acres at the intersection of Memorial Boulevard and Laurel Drive in Coolbaugh Township, Monroe County - a mostly forested site with two headwater tributaries on the parcel. The facility would be used for storage purposes. There would be 52 truck docks, with parking for 267 automobiles and 90 trailers. The developer is proposing to discharge stormwater into Exceptional Value wetlands adjacent to the High Quality Duckpuddle Run (NPDES Permit Application No. PAD450158).

“At the April 24th hearings, which were standing room only, everyone who testified spoke against the permitting of these warehouse proposals. We are urging PADEP to deny the NPDES applications. Regionally we cannot allow DEP to permit piece by piece warehouse proposals without any cumulative impact review of the harm these large developments will cause to Exceptional Value and High Quality streams of the Delaware River Basin that remain.” — **Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

“Over the past year, we’ve seen over ten distribution center and warehouse projects proposed in Monroe County alone. Some of these projects, like this one, require the leveling of forests in special protection watersheds. In addition to the billions of dollars special protection waters bring to the region, these forests provide valuable services for communities, wildlife, and our waterways. DEP must consider the uniqueness of these resources and the harm that the stormwater discharge from these distribution centers - both individually and cumulatively- will have from pollutants like road salt, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and PFAS. DEP must do more to protect our Exceptional Value waters like Duckpuddle Run.” — **Abigail M. Jones, Esq., Vice President of Legal & Policy, PennFuture**

“TCTCWA has learned through hard experience that, once water resources are allowed to be degraded, restoration is often challenging if not impossible and involves expense that no one is willing to pay. This permit application must be given the utmost scrutiny, and if not proven harmless in accordance with DEP’s Exceptional Value antidegradation regulations, be denied.” — **Geoff Rogalsky, President, TobyhannaCreek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association**

“The pristine waters of the Poconos, like the Exceptional Value (EV) wetlands and Duckpuddle Run, are under threat. Distribution center projects like this one risk degrading our local streams by changing natural drainage patterns, dramatically increasing impervious surfaces, and creating more cumulative impacts from stormwater runoff that needs to be managed by man-made means. But we cannot look at this project in isolation because it is part of a wave of irresponsible and thoughtless large-scale development moving across and reshaping the landscape. We must consider this unprecedented pattern as a whole and the cumulative impacts that they leave in their wake and will last for generations.” - ***Donna Kohut, Campaign Manager of Our Pocono Waters***

“The project is occurring within a unique ecological area called the Long Pond Macrosite, identified in the Monroe County National Area Inventory (NAI) recommended for permanent protection. This ecosystem contains numerous globally rare species of plants and animals, and also the exceptional value (EV) Tunkhannock Creek watershed and its tributaries. The parcel(s) in question used to be correctly zoned as Open Space Wetlands (OS-W) until the current Tunkhannock Township Supervisors decided to vote to re-zone it to General Commercial (C-2). The supervisors also voted to increase the building height from 35 feet to 60 feet in 2022.” - ***Alexander Jackson, Tunkhannock resident.***

“The science is clear - forests, forested wetlands, riparian buffers, protection of headwater streams and floodplains are critical to face the challenges climate change is already bringing to our communities. Our remaining forests that cool headwater streams and sensitive unique habitats like the Long Pond Macrosite threatened by this warehouse that sustain and clean groundwater cannot be sacrificed for warehouse and commercial real estate schemes we do not need. Empty warehouse space, shopping centers, strip malls exist throughout the Delaware Valley and reuse of these already spoiled areas over sacrificing our EV and HQ streams and habitats is needed now.” – ***Faith Zerbe, Co-Chair, Campaign for Clean Water Exceptional Value Team***

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May 24 Joint Comments on I80-115 C-1 Site, LLC Moyer Warehouse:
<https://bit.ly/3ouyO1D>

Mar 3 Joint DRN/Pennfuture Ltr and Monroe Co NOV regarding tree cutting, I80-115 C-1 Site, LLC Moyer: <https://bit.ly/3q83G8K>

May 10 Joint Comments for Coolbaugh/Orchard BJK Lot 1 Warehouse:
<https://bit.ly/3IDFxx2>