

## For Immediate Release

March 11, 2024

### Contacts:

Tracy Carluccio, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, [tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org](mailto:tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org), 215.692.2329

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, [keepermaya@delawareriverkeeper.org](mailto:keepermaya@delawareriverkeeper.org), 215.801.3043

Zulene Mayfield, Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, [zmmills@aol.com](mailto:zmmills@aol.com), 302.397.1804

Ginny Marcille-Kerslake, Food and Water Watch, [gmarcillekerslake@fwwatch.org](mailto:gmarcillekerslake@fwwatch.org), 215.200.2966

Tammy Murphy, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania, [tammy@psrpa.org](mailto:tammy@psrpa.org), 215.749.0960

## **Communities Occupy MACH2 Hydrogen Hub Meeting *MACH2's Lack of Public Engagement and Disclosure Draws Fire and Ire***

*Northeast Philadelphia, PA* – Community members and organizations from throughout the region that would be impacted by components of the proposed [Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub \(MACH2\)](#) attended the MACH2 public meeting held on March 11 at the Steamfitters Union Hall in northeast Philadelphia. This was the first in-person public meeting MACH2 leadership has held in the Philadelphia region, yet it provided no special accommodations to include the very frontline communities that would be most impacted.

The [meeting](#), quietly announced on Friday, Feb. 16 by MACH2, was held far from the communities who would be adversely impacted by proposed projects for the southeastern Pennsylvania portion of the hydrogen hub, including but not limited to the HILCO site (former PES Refinery in south Philadelphia), the Schuylkill River Tank Farm, PGW facilities, SEPTA locations, Philadelphia riverfront terminal, the Monroe Refinery, and the Marcus Hook Industrial Complex. A [letter](#) was submitted by 32 regional organizations on February 21 asking that the meeting be changed to a location in or near the communities where the potential pollution impacts from these hydrogen projects would occur. None of the requested changes were made by MACH2 leadership.

Community members and organizational representatives protested the MACH2 meeting to expose the lack of public outreach prior to the meeting, lack of accessibility for the communities that would be most deeply affected, and to challenge the failure of proponents to provide any meaningful level of information about the MACH2 Hub components nor opportunities for community engagement. People in the room and outside the meeting location expressed “MACH2 Shuts Us Out”, “We Do Not Consent”, “Nothing About Us, Without Us!”, and “We Want Real Clean Energy”, among other statements. Some wore stickers saying “Stop MACH2”.

They pointed out that most people are completely unaware of the massive MACH2 Hub plans for southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, centered on the Delaware River Watershed, which could have enormous adverse impacts and rely on billions of dollars in government subsidies. They objected to a meeting being held before current and reliable details about the hub’s cluster of projects are disclosed. They stated that much of what is known about hydrogen production, transport, storage and combustion has raised alarm bells due to the potential for pollution and exposure to hazards that endanger communities and the environment.

It was highlighted by meeting attendees that MACH2 stated in a [letter](#) responding to the community letter of protest about the meeting that “when MACH2 starts breaking ground on individual projects” there would be community outreach – it was pointed out that it’s far too late to affect any change to a project if it is already breaking ground.

Representatives from organizations that attended the MACH2 meeting commented:

**Zulene Mayfield, Chairperson of Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living, stated,** "When we found out this meeting was going to be held up here we asked for changes to make it accessible for the Chester community but our requests were ignored. We went to extraordinary lengths to get here today to make it clear that the decisions MACH2 makes must reflect our community's input and we won't tolerate any environmental or public health harm, period. We say 'Nothing about us, without us!' We are here and we aren't going away."

"The MACH2 Hydrogen Hub is going to have profound, far reaching, and perpetual impacts on frontline communities and on our region. Today's meeting was a political stunt for a bunch of politically motivated and self-serving talking heads. With participation in this meeting, despite knowing the concerns of impacted communities in advance regarding meeting access, timing and details, the MACH2 leaders such as Collin O'Mara, as well as politicians like Governor Shapiro, demonstrated a disregard and disdain for the communities that will be most directly affected by MACH2," **offered Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, with the regional organization Delaware Riverkeeper Network.** "The workday timing, the location, and the failure to ensure community members have a meaningful way to express concerns, input and questions throughout the meeting demonstrates an abject disregard for communities and ensuring environmental justice engagement and protections,"

"Our concerns for health and safety are for all parts of our community, including our family and neighbors in organized labor. Going forward, we expect all community members to be integral participants in the remainder of the decisions regarding the proposed MACH2 project," **said Tammy Murphy, Advocacy Director of the Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania.**

"From the beginning, the MACH2 hydrogen hub has been shrouded in secrecy, with impacted community members kept in the dark and out of the conversation. Today was more of the same. We see the same corporations, trade groups and politicians that promote fracking and fossil fuel infrastructure promoting MACH2. We see them pressuring President Biden to loosen the rules that would put guardrails on hydrogen energy's dangerous potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions. This all points to the same old, dirty status quo rather than the clean energy future we urgently need to invest in and move toward," **said Ginny Marcille-Kerslake, Eastern Pennsylvania Organizer, Food & Water Watch.**

**Fermin Morales, Electrician IBEW member Local 98 said,** "Do the building trades really believe in climate change or is this another feeble attempt to maintain membership to continue paying union dues without a clear vision to move forward into a future without fossil fuels and hydrogen hypes? Does quality of life matter to the leadership of the building trades? The air we breathe and the water we drink should be a priority over the MACH2 project for something more sustainable."

"We came to this public meeting today to say that we know that the MACH2 hydrogen hub has already mapped where it's planning to build many of its components that will endanger public safety and the environment and pollute peoples' air and water. How can anyone believe there will be an honest process with the public taking part in these critical decisions when these plans are not only already carved in stone but hidden from public view? We want the Department of Energy to see that MACH2 has utterly failed to engage the public as they are supposed to do and should not be awarded the funding the federal government has promised," **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

### **Background:**

The [Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub \(MACH2\)](#) was announced in October 2023 as a proposed recipient of \$750 Million in federal funding from the Biden Administration, which has earmarked \$7 Billion for seven "Hydrogen Hubs" across the nation. MACH2 would reportedly comprise 17 components throughout southeastern Pennsylvania, South and central New Jersey, and Delaware. There has been very little information available about the details of the proposed Hub and what the impacts would be on the air, water, and quality of life for communities or on the Delaware River Watershed environment.

Community Objections: A [letter](#) of protest was submitted February 21<sup>st</sup> by 32 organizations from the region included in the footprint of the proposed MACH2 calling for the meeting to be changed to make it accessible and inclusive of potentially impacted populations. The letter was submitted to the MACH2 Hub, the U.S. Department to Energy, and its Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations with a copy to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council. Additionally, on January 31 a joint [letter](#) outlining some of the grave concerns about the MACH2 hydrogen hub was submitted by 45 organizations and 184 individuals to the MACH2 Hub, the U.S. Department to Energy, and the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations.

Federal Tax Credits: The Internal Revenue Service is holding a Public Hearing on March 25 on their proposed rulemaking that will govern how hundreds of billions of dollars in tax credits are awarded for hydrogen projects. Industrial interests are pushing hard to weaken these regulations to allow more carbon to be emitted by hydrogen projects; this would further subsidize the creation of hydrogen fuel using fossil gas and other dirty fuels. **In fact, MACH2 and all seven hydrogen hubs jointly filed comments complaining that the strict carbon reduction requirements should be weakened, [as reported](#).** The proposed regulations which would provide credit for production of “clean hydrogen” under 45V of the Internal Revenue Code. 88 Fed. Reg. 89,220 was created by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act and had a public comment period that ended February 26. The public can still register to attend the Public Hearing but must do so by March 18. The Hearing is in person in Washington D.C. but there is “telephonic” participation. The deadline to register to testify has passed but you can register to attend through the web portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/> and at [publichearings@irs.gov](mailto:publichearings@irs.gov) .

###