



For Immediate Release

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Clean Air Council, Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Mountain Watershed Association Demand DEP Accountability in Mariner East 2 Spills

October 24, 2017 -- On Monday, Clean Air Council, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Mountain Watershed Association, Inc. requested that the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board direct the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to abide by a court-ordered protocol designed to prevent spills of drilling fluid along the Mariner East 2 pipelines.

In August, the groups entered into a settlement with the DEP and Sunoco to prevent spills of drilling fluid associated with Sunoco's horizontal directional drilling and to protect drinking water supplies and fragile ecosystems across the state. Since then, more spills have occurred, adding to the over 100 spills of drilling fluid to date. For example, during the course of less than a week in early October, there were four spills at a site in Chester County located at Boot Road and Enterprise Drive. Drilling continued anyway.

"The Department has been given another chance to fulfill its duties, and yet it continues to fail PA residents and communities," said Joseph Minott, Executive Director of the Clean Air Council. "The protections ordered by the Board should have been in place before the Department ever issued permits to Sunoco. We're demanding that DEP uphold its mission and hold Sunoco accountable."

The August settlement was adopted by the Environmental Hearing Board as a Stipulated Order and established a protocol that the Department and Sunoco must follow in responding to spills. The protocol is designed to prevent repeat spills and requires Sunoco to stop drilling until the Department inspects the site of a spill and ensures more spills won't happen there.

The Department has not been applying the protocol in all instances, resulting in Sunoco continuing to spill drilling fluid at the same sites. Monday's motion requests that the Board clarify the spill protocol to ensure the protections the parties agreed to are followed moving forward.

"It is unfortunate that once again it is the responsibility of non-profit organizations to ensure that the Department appropriately responds to Sunoco's ongoing spills," said Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

The Board's Order is part of an ongoing appeal of 20 deficient water permits the Department issued for the Mariner East 2 pipelines in February. That Order was entered after the Board had halted all horizontal directional drilling for the Mariner East 2 pipelines due to the damage Sunoco's drilling practices was causing to drinking water supplies and the environment.

"It is deeply concerning that despite the Board's intervention, Sunoco is still spilling repeatedly at the same locations and the Department isn't stopping it," said Melissa Marshall, Attorney for Mountain Watershed Association. "The public deserves and expects better."