

**Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Berks Gas Truth
Sourland Conservancy ~ NJ Sierra Club
Clean Water Action (NJ) ~ Environment NJ**

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**DRBC Withdraws Request for Joint Hearings With FERC
States it Anticipates No Hearings in 2016**

Washington Crossing, PA: The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) submitted a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) withdrawing its April 2015 request for Joint Hearings between the two agencies. In a notice placed on its website it stated that it does not anticipate holding hearings in 2016 on a proposed DRBC docket.

April 23, 2015 DRBC first wrote FERC asking that the two agencies conduct joint hearings stating: "In view of the high level of public interest in the PennEast Pipeline, a joint DRBC hearing and FERC public meeting would result in a more efficient process overall in our view."

Immediately in response, the public began urging that DRBC rescind this suggestion and instead commit to seven independent hearings along the length of the pipeline. The campaign began with a letter written to DRBC Executive Director Steve Tambini by Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, on May 13 stating: "The Delaware Riverkeeper Network ("DRN") urges you to retract your suggestion of a joint FERC/DRBC public hearing process regarding the PennEast Pipeline Project."

Since that time the DRBC has received petitions and letters from over 6,000 individuals along with 16 organizations urging 7 independent hearings along the length of the pipeline route be held by the DRBC. In addition, DRBC received valentines signed and submitted by over 2,000 individuals. At every DRBC meeting since May, 2015 there have been multiple members of the public urging an answer to the request.

In a letter submitted to the FERC docket dated April 25, 2016, the DRBC wrote:

“April 23, 2015, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that included a request for FERC to consider a joint public meeting and DRBC public hearing on the captioned project. I am writing today to withdraw that request. The DRBC will conduct its public process independently of FERC’s.”

“This is an important step in securing an independent, accessible and fully transparent hearing process from the Delaware River Basin Commission. It also shows us that the DRBC is listening to the concerns of the public and wants to instill public confidence in their decisionmaking process,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. “The DRBC has an unmatched responsibility to protect the water resources of the Delaware River basin. DRBC’s commitment to a better hearing process than first envisioned by them a year ago, is an important evolution in their thinking on this project and an important first step in their decisionmaking process. DRBC also notifying the public that they do not anticipate hearings in 2016 is also beneficial for allowing the public to know how much time they have to review the voluminous application PennEast has filed with the DRBC.”

"The Delaware River Basin Commission has made the right decision to withdraw its request to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a joint public meeting and hearing on the proposed PennEast pipeline. We thank the Commissioners for their decision, one thousands of people in communities impacted by the project have been calling on them to make for the past year. It's clear the Commissioners understand that the members of the public deserve the opportunity to air their many concerns about the project to the appropriate panels in separate events," says **Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.**

“The Sourland Conservancy wishes to thank the Delaware River Basin Commission for withdrawing its request for joint public hearings regarding the proposed PennEast pipeline with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. DRBC’s decision to hold its own public hearings reflects the strong concern opponents of the proposed pipeline have expressed to the Delaware River Basin Commission and will ensure a process that is more fair, more easily accessible to the public and much more useful in providing crucial information to the Commissioners.” **Caroline Katmann, Executive Director, Sourland Conservancy.**

“This is great news and the first real victory in the battle against PennEast Pipeline. We applaud the Delaware River Basin Commission for doing an independent review and having an open public process. However, we still need to make sure we have 7 public hearings so people have enough time to review this project. This is a complicated application and there are many issues that need to be thoroughly addressed and vetted. The PennEast pipeline is a very damaging and dangerous proposal that has severe consequences to the environment. We need an agency like DRBC to provide a thorough independent review because we cannot trust FERC. FERC is a rubberstamp to an industry it’s supposed to regulate,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “We believe that without having seven hearings throughout the Basin, the public will not have enough time or opportunity to be able to put on the record all of their concerns and all the issue that they care about. The public needs to have more time for the

public to scrutinize its application and have a say in the process. The more they can do this the better it will be for everyone. We will continue to fight to stop this pipeline and make sure that the DRBC will does their job and protect the Delaware Valley from this dangerous and damaging pipeline. We need the DRBC to say keep PennEast Pipeline the FERC out of our Valley.”

"The people have won an important battle with today's declaration that DRBC will hold separate hearings from FERC, the wholly owned subsidiary of the fossil fuel industry. DRBC needs to finish setting the field, cross the Delaware with 7 public hearings up and down the proposed destructive path, continue listening to the citizens and just say no to the dirty, dangerous fracked gas PennEast pipeline to win the war," **offered David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action.**

“The DRBC got this right – this is a big victory for the public. Reviewing PennEast’s application demands an independent process, and the first step is to hold separate public hearings “ said **Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.** “We urge the DRBC to ensure that all residents get a chance to weigh in by holding seven separate hearings across the pipeline’s route.”

For more information see the DRBC website at:

http://www.nj.gov/drbc/home/spotlight/approved/20160425_penneast_update.html

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