

For Immediate Release

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Communities Call for DRBC's Denial of PennEast at DRBC Meeting

According to testifiers who joined forces to deliver a single comment, along with over 95 organizations and 3,000 people signing on in support, the Delaware River Basin Commission is obligated to deny the PennEast Pipeline.

Washington Crossing, PA: On December 11, 2019, community members joined together at the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) meeting, demanding that the DRBC deny the PennEast Pipeline by delivering a joint, detailed comment outlining the many reasons why the docket must be denied.

Members of the public read the joint comment, with each testifier reading for two minutes and the next testifier picking up where the prior left off, showing that community members are standing united in opposition to PennEast. The comment outlined: the misinformation and deficiencies in the information that PennEast has provided to regulators and the public; the DRBC's own requirements; and the recent 3rd Circuit Court decision which ruled the pipeline company cannot condemn state-owned land. The joint comment made clear that it is not appropriate for the DRBC to do anything but deny a docket to the PennEast Pipeline.

Many present wore green "No PennEast" headbands, sending a silent but powerful message to the DRBC Commissioners.

The comment delivered by the collective of individuals on behalf of the larger community began:

"Many of us are here today representing individuals, organizations and businesses across our watershed concerned about the PennEast pipeline and the irreparable harm its construction would inflict on our watershed, communities, and world. There are many steps the DRBC has taken with regards to the PennEast pipeline that are important, precedent-setting and demonstrate important leadership. But we are concerned that DRBC has continued to leave the PennEast application open for over three and a half years despite evidence on the record and recent events that make clear it is time for DRBC to reject the project and close the file.

And so we come before you today, as a community, to ask you to formally, officially, and immediately REJECT the PennEast pipeline project and thereby CLOSE the file on this wrong-headed project and proposal.”

In addition, an organizational sign-on letter (signed by 99 organizations) and a petition (signed by over 3,000 individuals) were delivered on the same day to the DRBC Commissioners, further making clear that the public is unified in opposition to the pipeline. In part, the organizational sign-on letter says, “DRBC can and should be exercising its authority across the entire right of way of every pipeline infrastructure project that advances – DRBC has independent authority, responsibilities, and legal mandates that it must fulfill. The decisions and actions you take with regards to the PennEast pipeline are setting the precedent for every other pipeline to come.” View the letter at http://bit.ly/drbcorgletter12_2019

The petition also demands the DRBC deny the pipeline, saying, “It is no longer legally appropriate, nor morally defensible, for you to continue to keep the application file open and leave communities and natural resources across the basin threatened with harm from the ever-present PennEast-axe hanging over our heads.”

“It is time for the DRBC to deny a docket for the PennEast pipeline project. It would be legally inappropriate for them to do otherwise,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.** “At this time when the state of New Jersey has demonstrated its opposition to the project by rejecting it 3 times and denying the right of PennEast to take state property rights in order to force construction, when the federal government is trying to reduce the rights of states to protect themselves from pipelines with regulatory rollbacks, and when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is amping up its rubber stamp process for fracked gas pipelines, it is more important than ever that DRBC exercise its full authority and stand with the state of New Jersey, and with the residents and towns of our watershed, to reject the PennEast pipeline. The actions DRBC takes with regards to PennEast - both in substance and procedure - are setting precedent for every other pipeline to come; what happens at the DRBC will impact us all for generations to come.”

“We should be past the point of needing to state the reasons the PennEast Pipeline must be rejected. They have been stated over and over again for five years,” **said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.** “In fact, there’s only one reason the DRBC needs. The PennEast pipeline is guaranteed to do considerable irreparable harm to the watershed the commission exists to protect. Period.”

“The courts have ruled against PennEast’s ability to seize land, climate science is dictating that things are worse than we thought, and residents and activists vehemently oppose the project,” **says Eric**

Benson, Campaign Director for Clean Water Action. "Three strikes and you are out, it is past time for the DRBC to reject PennEast pipeline once and for all."

"The DRBC should throw out PennEast's application. They do not have enough information they need for their permits and especially now since PennEast cannot use eminent domain on NJ state owned land. The pipeline would threaten the entire Valley including 91 acres of wetlands and over 44 miles of forest, 88 waterways, and over 1,600 acres' total. Its route would cut through the Delaware River and Raritan Canal, Bulls Island State Park, Goat Hill and more. We are calling on the DRBC to step up and protect our clean water and prevent the Delaware Valley from getting cracked by this dangerous pipeline. We ask the commission to reject PennEast," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** "We are telling the DRBC to Don't Ruin the Basin Commission!"

"The DRBC has attempted to duck and cover on the PennEast pipeline application for more than three years. Despite overwhelming evidentiary materials illustrating how PennEast would be an environmental disaster for the Delaware River watershed, the DRBC has failed to uphold its regulatory authority. The DRBC should deny the PennEast docket on the merits and also to send a clear message to the gas industry, FERC and others that our Delaware watershed lands are not a gasland free-for-all zone," **said Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.**

"Bucks County is one of many communities that will bear the brunt of the environmental damage caused by the pipeline. It is time to protect our residents, water, wildlife and forests - and the economies that rely on a healthy ecosystem to function. Pursuing this pipeline at a time when we need to turn away from fossil fuels, and towards renewable energy solutions, in order to address the serious impacts of climate change is unacceptable. We urge the Delaware River Basin Committee to reject this project, and close the file on the PennEast pipeline," **said Stacy Carr-Poole, Executive Director, Bucks County Audubon Society.**

"If built and operated at capacity, the PennEast pipeline would add over 20 million metric tons of greenhouse gas each year to New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions. At a time when New Jersey is working on programs to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, this would increase total emissions by about 20%, making it impossible for the Administration to achieve the goals it set in its new Energy Master Plan and Integrated Energy Plan," **said Ken Dolsky, Organizer, Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipeline - NJ.**

"The PennEast Pipeline must be looked at in its totality, and, if the New Jersey portion fails to meet the criteria necessary for approval, how can any portion in Pennsylvania be approved conditionally or otherwise?" **said Tara Zrinski, Northampton County Councilwoman.** "This process of gaining segmented approval should not be condoned by the DRBC who has the jurisdiction to and should reject the PennEast Pipeline project to protect our waterways from the exploitation of our natural resources and cumulative impacts along the entire route for corporate profit."

“At this point in history we know that burning fossil fuels is contributing to climate change, so promoting use of natural gas is promoting climate change. Dr. Terry Engelder, the ‘Father of the Marcellus Shale’ is quoted in the book, End of Country, written by Seamus McGraw, stated that ‘If we are still burning fossil fuels in 40 years, we are in big trouble.’ That quote is already 11 years old,” **said Scott Cannon, Environmental Adviser, Action Together NEPA.**

“At a time when we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7.6% annually, building more pipelines for fossil gas is a step in the wrong direction,” **said Walter Tsou, MD, MPH, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility - Pennsylvania.**

"We've seen the destruction of our critical streams and wetlands in our watershed from the Mariner East pipeline construction, and we cannot allow PennEast to repeat those impacts by constructing its unnecessary pipeline. The DRBC must take swift action to close the PennEast docket once and for all to prevent the further degradation of our shared waters," **said Joe Minott, Executive Director, Clean Air Council.**

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