

CP17-46-00



Hazlet Township Environmental Commission

Date: April 8, 2017

ORIGINAL

The Hazlet Environmental Commission strongly opposes the Proposed Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) project involving construction and operation of facilities by Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (TRANSCO) from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and through Somerset and Middlesex Counties, New Jersey and in the estuarine waters of Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay in both the State of New Jersey and the State of New York for the following reasons:

1. Though the pipeline would be trenched in and covered over, the project would still leave a visible mark of at least a 100-foot cleared right-of-way cutting through forests, and public and private lands.
2. The pipeline's route would also cut a swath through Raritan Bay and Lower New York Harbor. These tidal waters provide valuable public recreation for fishing, swimming, kayaking, and boating. In addition, over 100 people make a living harvesting clams, crabs, and other aquatic resources from Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay for retail at local seafood markets and restaurants.
3. 23 miles of pipeline will go through the Raritan-Hudson Estuary, which is home to a wide diversity of wildlife. According to the 1997 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service document entitled, *Significant Habitats and Habitat Complexes of the New York Bight Watershed*, Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay have environmental significance due to its "geographic location and to the variety and quality of habitat types found here; these include shallow estuarine open waters, sandy beach, maritime forest, salt marsh, mudflats, and riparian forest. These habitats support a large number of regionally rare and important species." This includes Humpback whales and Loggerhead turtles - federally-listed threatened species, and dolphins.
4. In-field studies completed by the National Park Service at Great Kills Park on Staten Island, New York City, part of the Gateway National Recreation Area, and monitoring studies by the Bayshore Regional Watershed Council at several locations along Raritan Bay and Sandy Hook Bay, including Cliffwood Beach in Aberdeen Township, NJ, show there is small, but viable Horseshoe crab population struggling to survive in New York Harbor. Horseshoe crab eggs and larvae are a seasonal food item of invertebrates and finfish. From May through August, Striped bass, White perch, American eel, Silver perch, Weakfish, Kingfish, summer and winter flounder also eat eggs and larvae. We believe the construction of the pipeline would degrade the overall aquatic food web in Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay.
5. According to the Department of Energy's 2015 Quadrennial Energy Review, 46 percent of gas pipeline capacity in the United States is unused, and improving the flexibility and capabilities of current infrastructure is a better investment in many parts of the country.

The Commission feels this project will destroy sea life, damage fishing areas and increase the risk of gas leaks, explosions and degrade the quality of life for people and wildlife in a densely populated and heavily trafficked area. We are being asked to gamble with the lives of an entire region for a project that we feel is wholly unnecessary.

Sincerely,

Christopher Cullen, Chairman, Hazlet Environmental Commission

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