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**REGARDING:**

APPLICANT: Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company LLC

PROJECT: Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project

FILE NUMBERS: NJDEP File No. 0000-01-1001.3 FWW 180001 Individual Permit

NJDEP HEARING DATE: 11/5/18

**FROM:**

Full Name:

Full Address:

According to the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:7A, **“compelling public need”** means that “based on specific facts, the proposed regulated activity will serve an essential health or **safety** need of the municipality in which the proposed regulated activity is located, that the public health and **safety** benefit from the proposed use and that the proposed use is required to serve existing needs of the residents of the State, and that there is no other means available to meet the established public need.”

The Natural Gas Act does not prevent states from providing safety and environmental impact information to FERC, which FERC must consider in its Certificate order and must document in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Environmental impacts include those that would affect the health or residents and wildlife as well as environmental resources.

The overall NESE Project is expected to impact a significant amount of wetland in New Jersey – over 41 acres, including approximately 20 acres of forested wetland. In addition, the NESE Project will remove 35.3 acres of upland forest, and the impacts on forested uplands will be long term or permanent because trees would take up to 50 years or longer to become reestablished and would not be allowed to become reestablished directly over the pipeline.

**EXPLOSION RISKS FROM CONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE MADISON ORDNANCE WERE NOT ADEQUATELY ASSESSED IN THE APPLICATION FOR A FRESHWATER WETLANDS INDIVIDUAL PERMIT.**

**Morgan Ordnance Depot**, between Route 35 and Cheesequake Road near Ernston Road in Sayreville is 0.3 miles north of MP 11.10 of the Madison Loop according to the NESE Application to FERC (03/27/2017 - Resource Report 7 – pp. 7-30 & 7-31). Williams/Transco has stated that there could be soil contamination from this site in part of the Madison Loop from Route 9 to the Raritan Bay: “As of December 17, 1995, the site is listed as a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) with confirmed contamination. The USACE FUDS Geographic Information System public database indicates that the site contamination area includes a portion of the Madison Loop starting from approximately Route 9 to the Raritan Bay shoreline (USACE 2013).”

At issue in this area is the fact that, following massive explosions at this munitions site in 1918, unexploded munitions were spread over a large area, and the USACE has not completed a comprehensive survey to identify locations of still unexploded munitions that are buried in the ground in the area where Williams/Transco plans to construct the Madison Loop.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was scheduled to investigate the area to determine the location of any buried ordnance. That project was not implemented, so the danger of excavations in this area has not been eliminated. Thus, construction of the Madison Loop in this area and surrounding areas that may have buried unexploded munitions is an additional safety risk that was not addressed in the application.

Over a century later, explosive debris continues to surface regularly across a 1.2-mile (1.9 km) radius, and the USACE has been called to Sayreville in the past to look for unexploded munitions at the LaMer development as well as at two schools in Sayreville – Eisenhower and Samsel. [Reference: [*"Old military explosive unearthed in schoolyard"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20160304024051/http%3A/sub.gmnews.com/news/2007-07-06/Front_page/039.html). The Suburban. July 6, 2007. Archived from the original on March 4, 2016. We find these things a couple of times a year in town.] Williams/Transco acknowledged this in their application to FERC by stating: “Nearly a century later, explosive debris continues to surface regularly across a 1.2-mile radius. Because this site contamination boundary includes a portion of the Project facilities and has an unclear remedial history, it is possible that soil contamination associated with this property could be present in the vicinity of the Project facilities. If contamination is unearthed, Transco will adhere to its Unanticipated Discovery of Contamination Plan included in RR 1, Appendix 1B, Attachment 8.” (Application 3/27/17 to FERC in Resource Report 7 – pp. 7-30 & 7-31). However, this only addresses potential contaminated soils and not the possibility of hitting or unearthing unexploded munitions. If any munitions explode, there is the potential that contaminated soils would be spread across an undetermined amount of wetlands, and this possibility was not considered in Williams/Transco’s application for a Freshwater Wetlands Permit.

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**RISKS TO THE SAFETY OF RESIDENTS AS WELL AS WILDLIFE FROM THE COMPRESSOR STATION’S EMISSIONS SHOULD DISCOUNT ANY ASSERTION OF A “PUBLIC NEED” FOR THE NESE PROJECT.**

Compressor Station 206 is projected to release flammable compounds (Ammonia, Formaldehyde, Acetaldehyde, Benzene, Toluene, Ethyl Benzene, Naphthalene, Xylenes) and, in the event of a fire, the blast that would result has the potential to be catastrophic.

According to Williams/Transco, the Potential Impact Radius (PIR) is 820-feet for the compressor station and associated pipelines at that site. The PIR is often referred to as an “incineration zone” in which there is a 99% chance that people and buildings in it will not survive from a natural gas explosion/fire, and significant damages from some pipeline explosions have exceeded PIRs. In only using the pipeline diameter and Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP) to determine the PIR calculation, this does not consider other relevant risk factors such as the presence of another nearby pipeline, velocity of gas going through the pipeline, fuel or fire accelerants such as trees, topography, or weather conditions.

Poisonous gases are produced and can result in massive explosions, further contaminating the air and water. In fact, acetaldehyde can spontaneously decompose or polymerize to form explosive peroxides when heated, distilled, evaporated or even, when contaminated. It is considered flammable, reactive and an explosion hazard.

The NESE Project does not give anything to New Jersey, and it does not forward State goals to move toward renewable energy. Looking at science, research, prior experiences with pipeline projects, and a need for Williams/Transco to follow the letter of New Jersey’s regulations, the application for a Freshwater Wetlands Individual Permit should be denied by the NJDEP. There is no “compelling public need” for the NESE Project which would put residents at risk.

References:

1. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Ammonia.** <http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/0084.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
2. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Formaldehyde.** <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/0946.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
3. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Acetaldehyde.** <http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/0001.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
4. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Benzene.** <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/0197.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
5. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Toluene**. <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/1866.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
6. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Ethyl Benzene.** <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/0851.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
7. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Naphthalene.** <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/1322.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.
8. New Jersey Department of Health. Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet. **Xylenes.** <http://nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb/documents/fs/2014.pdf> Accessed 4/15/18.