

October 18, 2019.

Governor Phil Murphy
Office of the Governor
20 West State Street, 4th Floor
P.O. Box 022
Trenton, NJ 08625

COPIES TO: Commissioner Catherine McCabe, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Dear Governor Murphy:

As elected officials representing residents of New Jersey, we write to express our profound opposition to the proposed Northeast Supply Enhancement (“NESE”) Project. NESE offers no benefit to the state or our constituents in any way, and only harm will come to our constituents, our environment, and our future if this project is approved.

As you know, NESE is a proposed fossil fuel expansion project backed by Oklahoma based fossil-fuel giant Williams-Transco. The project calls for the creation of a massive new compressor station in Franklin Township, 3.4 miles of pipeline in Middlesex County, and 23.4 miles of offshore pipeline running through the Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay.

In addition to offering only harm to the State of New Jersey and its residents, the NESE project is not needed and not wanted by the vast majority of New Yorkers and New York Elected officials. This widespread opposition includes roughly sixty New York elected officials such as Governor Andrew Cuomo, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and eleven members of Congress. There is also strong opposition to the project here in New Jersey. An audit of the public comments submitted to the New Jersey DEP on the proposed project found a ratio of 1000 to 1 against the project.

Moreover, the negative environmental and health impacts from water and air degradation associated with the proposed project are well documented. It is for these reasons that the Department of Environmental Protection denied the project, back in June – only for the applicant to reapply days later. From the air pollution associated with the compressor station, to the resuspension of sediment containing toxic chemicals in the beautiful Raritan Bay, the list of legal and good governance reasons to deny the project, with prejudice, are long and unequivocal.

Finally, on top of the lack of need and clear environmental and public health risks associated with the project, we are also concerned with the safety record of the applicant, Williams/Transco. Over the past decade, Williams’ pipelines and pumping stations have suffered over ten

explosions or fires.¹ Many of these incidents resulted in human fatality and injury, release of methane into our atmosphere, or contamination of groundwater resources. Moreover, the applicant has faced five safety and risk violations from various federal agencies over the past five years, including a civil penalty for an incident in New York and New Jersey. In 2015, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration fined the company for failing to properly inspect transmission pipeline valves in New York and New Jersey.² Finally, the applicant has also received numerous fines from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the unsafe discharge of pollutants.³

Therefore, in the name of good governance we urge you and the New Jersey DEP to follow the law and robustly deny all pending permits for NESE, with prejudice, to protect the health and safety of our constituents, as well as the quality of our natural environment.

Sincerely,

Senator Christopher Bateman
Legislative District 16

Deputy Mayor James Vassanella
Franklin Township

Assemblyman Danielsen
Legislative District 17

Councilman Rajiv Prasad
Franklin Township

Freeholder Shanel Robinson
Somerset County

Councilwoman Kimberly Francois
Franklin Township

Mayor Fred Tagliarini
Aberdeen Township

Councilwoman Crystal Pruitt
Franklin Township

Mayor Rhonda LeGrice
Borough of Atlantic Highlands

Councilman Theodore Chase
Franklin Township

Councilwoman Lori Hohenleitner
Borough of Atlantic Highlands

Councilman William Galtieri
Franklin Township

Mayor Phil Kramer
Franklin Township

Councilman Charles Onyejiaka
Franklin Township

¹ National Transportation Safety Board, Pipeline Accident Reports (2019), available at <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/accidentReports/Pages/pipeline.aspx>;

² Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Letter to Mr. Alan S. Armstrong (2015), available at https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/reports/enforce/documents/120141009/120141009_Final%20Order_12292015_text.pdf;

³ Environmental Protection Agency, Civil enforcement Case Report (2017), available at <https://echo.epa.gov/enforcement-case-report?id=WV000A05100127-14888>;

Councilman Carl R.A. Wright
Franklin Township

Mayor Richard O'Neil
Borough of Highlands

Council President Rosemary Ryan
Borough of Highlands

Councilwoman Linda Mazzola
Borough of Highlands

Councilwoman Carolyn Broullon
Borough of Highlands

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