# The Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project
# Impacts to Wildlife and the Economies of the Bayshore

**After years of mismanagement, Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay have seen significant improvements in water quality. The area is now home to not only numerous species of wildlife but has also become a center for a wide variety of economic and recreational activities.**
**The NESE project and the construction of a 23.4-mile pipeline that would rip through these ecosystems will harm marine life and the businesses which depend on clean waters.**

## Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay – Finally Flourishing

- As the nation's oldest industrial waterway, Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay were subject to widespread contamination for decades. However, since the 1970s, coastal waters in Raritan Bay have made tremendous improvements in overall quality and safety.
- Collectively, the Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay now support more than 200 species of fish, many of which are economically important to the fishing industry. The area also serves as a spawning ground for many important species.
- NESE threatens these improvements:
    - Toxins that have been buried underneath the surface will be disrupted during the construction, jeopardizing the entirety of the marine ecosystem.

## Vast Array of Marine Life in the Project Area:

- Benefitted by seasonal nutritional upwellings, Raritan Bay, Lower New York Bay, and surrounding waters host high volumes of algae, phytoplankton, and zooplankton, which in turn support a high variety of aquatic species, including the blue crab, ribbed mussel, shortnose sturgeon, bottlenose dolphin, and the harbor seal.
- Of the over 200 fish species found in the bay region, essential fish habitat is designated for 33 species in the area. Moreover, four fish species (Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, cusk, and oceanic whitetip shark), are federal or state-listed as threatened or endangered, and eight species (alewife, blueback herring, rainbow smelt, warsaw grouper, cusk, Atlantic bluefin tuna, dusky shark, and sand tiger shark) are listed as "species of concern" by the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Sixteen species of marine mammals, consisting of whales, dolphins, and seals, also use the Harbor and New York Bight during the year. This includes six species of whales that are critically endangered.
- In addition, five species of sea turtles, all federally designated as endangered, have been observed and documented within the NY/NJ Harbor and New York Bight.

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## NESE Threatens Marine Life:

- Marine mammals rely on echolocation, making them highly sensitive to noise. The NESE construction project requires the industrialization of the marine environment and will not only increase vessel activity but the use of heavy machinery which will operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The noise generated from these activities will harm and harass marine mammals for months, impacting navigation, and foraging.
- As a result of being denied numerous times before, William/Transco is trying to shorten the construction period which will intensify and concentrate the noise and industrial activities in the region. There has been no scientific assessment of the short and long-term impacts to marine mammals.
- None of NESE's environmental reviews have fully accounted for the acoustic impacts to fish and sea turtles.
- While the water quality has improved, decades of mismanagement and abuse of the waters has resulted in sediments containing harmful chemicals. The dredging of 23.4 miles of seafloor alone will re-suspend over 1,000,000 tons of contaminated sediments. The re-suspension of these toxins will have widespread and severe impacts to benthic species and the entirety of the marine ecosystem. Williams' most conservative estimate claims that the impacts to crustaceans will take up to three years to recuperate.
- The re-suspended sediment will also increase turbidity, making it hard for marine life to navigate and find food sources.

## Importance of a Clean and Healthy Raritan Bay:

- Many New Jersey residents rely on the water quality of Raritan Bay and the surrounding ecosystems for their livelihood. Fishermen, boaters, whale-watching businesses, and recreational interests will be greatly impacted by the intrusion and construction of the NESE pipeline.
- The improvements in water quality has created a hub for recreational activity. In New York and New Jersey 41,078 acres of public waterfront spaces surround the project area. The area serves an important recreational function supporting public and private boating activities, such as rowing, kayaking, canoeing, and sailing.
- National Parks in NY and NJ surrounding the project area, including the Gateway National Recreation Area, recently received 16,090,450 visitors who spent $559,169,600 in communities near the parks.
- Recreational fishing, whale watching, and scuba diving are also popular in the project area.

## Failure to Assess Adverse Economic Impacts:

- There is no complete analysis of adverse economic impacts from NESE that will be the result of disturbances to the Raritan and Lower New York Bay.
- There is no comprehensive assessment of long-term effects from the re-suspension of toxic sediments.

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**Impacts to the Fishing and Shell Fishing Industries:**

- The route of the pipeline cuts through seven fishing grounds used by both commercial and recreational fishermen. The re-suspension of toxins will negatively impact these fisheries. Once these toxins resettle, they will engulf fish eggs and larva, significantly harming future fish and shellfish populations.
- The strength and pressure testing of the pipeline requires sucking-up over 3.5 million gallons of water at an extremely fast rate (2,350 gallons per minute) through a mesh screen.
    - Fish eggs, larva, shellfish, and other sea creatures will be caught during the testing and killed from either the pressure, or entrapment within the pipeline.
    - Benthic and seafloor habitats will be disrupted due to the shallow depth of the bay, resulting in even more sediment disruption, increasing the amount of toxic chemicals re-suspended.
- Industrialization of the ecosystem: the construction methods will involve heavy machinery and increased vessel traffic, creating loud noises which are harmful to marine species.

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