



For Immediate Release

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DRBC Reverses Decision: Will Review Two Gas Pipelines After-The-Fact

West Trenton, NJ – After refusing multiple requests by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and others to mandate the Tennessee Gas Pipeline 300 Line Extension Project and the Columbia 1278 Replacement Project secure Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) review and dockets before being installed, on January 30, 2013, after the two projects have been completed, the DRBC has reversed their decision and will subject the two projects to review and permitting (in DRBC terms called getting a docket).

“It has been one year, almost to the day, since we asked the DRBC to exercise their jurisdiction over these pipelines. Once the DRBC sees the level of harm inflicted by these pipeline projects we hope they will make clear their intent to exercise jurisdiction over all pipeline projects that come through the Delaware River watershed,” said *Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper*.

On February 1, 2012 the Delaware Riverkeeper Network requested the DRBC exercise their jurisdiction and require DRBC review and docketing of the TGP 300 Line, Columbia 1278 Line and other pipelines proposed to pass through the Delaware River watershed.

On June 19, 2012 the Pike County Commissioners asked the DRBC to exercise its existing jurisdiction over all pipelines proposed for the Delaware River watershed. Also in June, multiple legislators including from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives: Greg Vitali, Bud George, Steve Santarsiero, Michael O’Brien, and Lawrence Curry asked the DRBC to consider review of pipelines passing through the watershed including the TGP 300 Line and Columbia 1278 Line.

On July 10, 2012 the DRBC wrote a letter in which it refused to exercise its jurisdiction over pipelines, including the TGP 300 line and the Columbia 1278 line.

On August 9, 2012 the Delaware Riverkeeper Network filed a request for a hearing asking the DRBC to reconsider their decision not to subject the projects to DRBC jurisdiction or review.

On September 12, 2012 the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, supported by 52 organizations, petitioned the DRBC to exercise their jurisdiction over gas pipelines passing through the watershed.

On December 5, 2012, without any prior notice or comment period, the DRBC rejected the Petition to exercise its jurisdiction over pipelines but said it would take a second look at the TGP 300 line and the Columbia 1278 Line, two projects which by this point had been completed.

Now, on January 30, 2013 the DRBC acknowledges it got it wrong, has reversed its previous decisions, and says that “Both projects are subject to Commission review.... Accordingly, I am directing my staff to undertake reviews of these projects after the fact. The project sponsors will be so informed and will be directed to submit applications” *said the letter signed by Carol Collier, Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission and written to Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and head of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.*

“While I certainly appreciate and respect that the DRBC is willing to admit they got it wrong, in this case they had ample notice, warning and pressure to get it right and to avoid much of the incredible level of harm that has been inflicted on the environments and communities of the Upper Delaware River watershed,” said *Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum*. “It is important that the DRBC immediately learn from their mistakes and announce a decision to exercise their jurisdiction over the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company’s Northeast Upgrade Project,” van Rossum added. (see map of the NEUP here: http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Factsheets/KMTennGasPipelinemap_091112.jpg)

van Rossum says that the Delaware Riverkeeper Network submitted an updated urgent request for the DRBC to review Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company’s Northeast Upgrade Project (NEUP) in light of the recent memo and letter she received from DRBC Executive Director Carol Collier (read the letter from DRN and the DRBC January 30 letter and memo here: http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Letters/DRBC_NEUP_Docket_Reconsider_1.31.13.pdf).

“The NEUP could begin clearing mature forests in a matter of days so this decision and request comes at a critical time. If DRBC were to act, it would not be too late for this pipeline project that would cut across the Delaware River near Milford, PA, cut through Delaware State Forest, Stokes State Forest, and High Point State Park, crossing steep slopes, sensitive wetlands and dozens of exceptional value streams causing irreparable harm,” says van Rossum. Delaware Riverkeeper Network says there are at least 13 proposed pipeline projects that could cut through the Delaware watershed in the coming months and years

Page 2 of 3

with the natural gas frenzy underway in Pennsylvania and other shale regions. A map commissioned by DRN of proposed pipeline routes can be found here:

http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Factsheets/Pipeline_map.pdf

“In addition, we will expect the DRBC to take a hard line in the level of restoration it will require for the TGP 300 Line and the Columbia 1278 Line,” van Rossum added. “We have evidence that the pipelines are continuing to inflict unnecessary damage in our watershed and will expect the DRBC to take strong steps to require the highest level of restoration possible. There is much that can and should be done to undo the harm. Frankly, it is the least DRBC can do considering that most of the harm could have been avoided if the DRBC had just exercised its jurisdiction in the first place,” concludes van Rossum.

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