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Organizations File Objections to MACH2 Hydrogen Hub “Community Meeting”

Public Engagement Requires Inclusion of Impacted Communities

Philadelphia, PA – A [letter](#) has been submitted by 32 organizations from the region included in the footprint of the proposed [**Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub \(MACH2\)**](#), protesting the first in-person “community meeting” MACH2 leadership is holding in Philadelphia, and calling for it to be made accessible and inclusive of potentially impacted populations. The letter was submitted to the MACH2 Hub, the U.S. Department of Energy, and its Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations with a copy to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

The [meeting](#), announced on Feb. 16 by the MACH2 Hub is planned for March 11 in northeastern Philadelphia on a weekday during work hours, making it impossible for many working people to attend. There is no option for virtual attendance, leaving out those who cannot travel. The letter states the MACH2 organizers did not consider input from, nor make any accommodations to provide access for, environmental justice communities that are located in the planned footprint of the MACH2 Hydrogen Hub cluster of projects.

The letter states:

“We request that you consider our concerns and set a meeting that will maximize, not limit, the people who will be able to take part. Environmental justice communities that could be impacted, in particular, should be given special consideration in regards to access and information about the MACH2 components that are planned for their communities as their environmental burdens are already too great with respect to established environmental justice laws. The perspectives of community members who would have to live with/alongside components of MACH2 are crucial for the MACH2 organizers to hear. This is especially important because of your invoking of the Biden Administration’s Justice40 Initiative that is supposed to drive community engagement for the hydrogen hubs. Your planned meeting does not reflect any consideration of the needs of the environmental justice communities.”

The letter objects to the location of the meeting, which is not close to where the infrastructure, potential pollution, and safety hazards would be located, as currently mapped. The letter also expresses that the venue, the Steamfitters Union Hall, is unacceptable, stating:

“Meetings for the community should be held in neutral locations such as a public meeting space, not a union hall. Our understanding is that there is funding earmarked in the MACH2 \$750 million for union apprenticeships that may benefit the Steamfitters – so we feel this location is biased.”

A major complaint expressed in the letter is that there has been very limited information about the MACH2 Hub components available for the public. Most people are completely unaware of the massive MACH2 Hub plans for southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, centered on the Delaware River Watershed, which could have enormous adverse impacts. The letter states:

“The public needs a rich level of information about MACH2 and its various components and how these will impact the quality of air, water, and community life...It is important to have current and reliable information before any community meeting...so people know what to expect and can ask informed questions at the community session. In order for communities to be able to provide their free, prior, informed consent of any proposal, each impacted community needs to understand how each facility and how the whole network of facilities comprising the hub will impact their lives, especially in terms of short and long term health impacts and public safety. We need facts about MACH2 to be transparent and shared widely long before there are any meetings to discuss the project.”

Representatives from organizations that signed the submitted letter commented:

“We have no idea what this MACH2 hydrogen hub would mean to us, how it will affect us, and the quality of our lives. Yet they are trying to layer another burden on us, without our knowledge or consent. Why are they excluding the affected public from their meeting? They don’t even have a question and answer session on the agenda. This is wrong in every way!” **said Zulene Mayfield, leader of Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL).**

“Community access and engagement should not simply be political rhetoric, but that is exactly what is happening when it comes to MACH2,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.** “We have heard repeatedly from the Department of Energy, Governor Shapiro, MACH2 head Collin O’Mara, and representatives from the City of Philadelphia how important it is to hear from the communities that will be impacted by MACH2, and we are being told incessantly about how all of these communities are going to benefit from the project. And yet, the only people who have had a say in the project are industry, academic institutions and others who are already receiving, or are set to receive, big money payouts from the project. But the communities who will bear the brunt of harm from MACH2 have yet to be heard. This public meeting is a sham. The fact that MACH2 leaders and political leaders don’t actually want to hear from real people confirms our concerns that there is a high human health, community safety, environmental, and quality of life impact for those living in the front line communities that will host the MACH2 pieces.”

“Residents have a right to free, prior, informed consent, especially in regard to hydrogen hubs that could contribute to higher rates of morbidity and mortality,” **stated Tammy Murphy, the advocacy director of Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania.**

“This is a case study in environmental injustice. MACH2’s planned meeting is nothing more than a sales pitch for hydrogen. The U.S. Department of Energy has made no attempt to ask the public if it wants hydrogen hubs and the MACH2 team has no intention of finding out. Community benefits means nothing more than making empty promises of job creation and economic benefits to communities that have been hit hard by polluting industries so many times that they know that what’s really in store for

them is risk of catastrophe and illness,” said **Karen Feridun, Co-founder of the No False Solutions PA and Better Path coalitions.**

“The MACH2 hydrogen hub is supposed to prove they are bringing community benefits and an engaging public input process to the places that are mapped for the hub hydrogen projects. Yet they are glaringly failing on all counts - they are withholding the information people need to participate meaningfully in the process and they are displaying blatant disregard for the targeted communities with a remote meeting that looks like a highly controlled show with no public involvement. This first in-person meeting MACH2 is holding here exposes a broken system at the starting gate and that is shameful,” said **Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

Background:

The **Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub (MACH2)** was announced in October 2023 as a proposed recipient of \$750 Million in federal funding from the Biden Administration, which has earmarked \$7 Billion for seven “Hydrogen Hubs” across the nation. A [letter](#) outlining some of the grave concerns about the MACH2 hydrogen hub was submitted by 45 organizations and 184 individuals on January 31 to the MACH2 Hub, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations.

A webinar, “Powerfully Engaging MACH2 Communities”, will be held on Monday, February 26 at 7pm. Registration for the webinar is free and open to all: <https://delawareriverkeeper.org/node/7227>

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