For Immediate Release:
May 2, 2019

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Organizations Urge DRBC & Governors to Deny PennEast Pipeline

Trenton, NJ – 111 organizations and over 1,600 individuals submitted a letter to the governors of New Jersey, New York, Delaware, and Pennsylvania urging them to exercise their full authority and say no to the PennEast pipeline. As Commissioners of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), all four governors have extensive regulatory authority with regard to the review and decisionmaking over the proposed construction of the PennEast pipeline, which includes approximately 120 miles of pipeline through New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The letter urges the Governors, in their rule as DRBC Commissioners, to take their decisionmaking authority seriously, stating:
“DRBC has broad authority over pipelines such as PennEast that will inflict significant impacts on the water resources of the basin and should ensure it exercises the full extent of that authority. Every one of the DRBC watershed states has an important stake in the outcome of the PennEast project, and the precedent that it sets for strong and meaningful DRBC review and decisionmaking.”

The letter continues, saying the DRBC has full authority to deny the pipeline:
“Based upon the public record on the PennEast pipeline, it is clear that DRBC has the authority to reject the PennEast pipeline for lack of complete and accurate information, because of the significant and irreparable harm to the water resources of the basin, and/or because of the harmful impacts to the natural resources of impacted states.”

The letter also singles out Governors Murphy and Wolf, calling on them to be vigilant in the exercise of their state level authority stating:
“In addition, Governors Murphy and Wolf, your environmental agencies have an irreplaceable obligation pursuant to the Clean Water Act to ensure compliance with all applicable state water quality standards.”

“The 4 Governors and the DRBC are setting important precedent when it comes to review and decisionmaking over pipelines that cut through the waterways and resources of the Delaware River watershed. The steps and decisions they take with regards to PennEast will dictate how all other pipelines are treated down the line. The data on the record already makes clear, the PennEast pipeline will inflict irreparable, illegal and unacceptable harm on our water resources,
our community and our environment, all for a fracked gas pipeline that is neither needed nor wanted. In 2012 the DRBC ignored the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and our multiple efforts to highlight their obligations to review the first of this new wave of major fracked gas pipelines cutting through our watershed. They got it wrong and pipelines built by Columbia Gas and Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co inflicted irreparable harm. In 2013 DRBC had to acknowledge, in a letter to me, their massive error. We are urging them not to make the same mistake. We are urging the Governors and the DRBC to listen to the people of the watershed now, before it is too late and to deny PennEast,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the regional Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a leading opponent of the PennEast Pipeline.

“The new alternatives presented by PennEast do not adequately mitigate the potential environmental and water resource impacts in the basin, but rather, introduce entirely new issues that must be considered by the DRBC. Moreover, the review of this project has been ongoing for many years now, and much of the information that was presented during the course of this project is now outdated. The DRBC must reconsider the implications of this project in the context of the changes that have occurred since this project was first proposed,” said Arianne Elinich of Bucks County Concerned Citizens Against the Pipelines.

"Our nation is experiencing an unprecedented aggressive push for natural gas pipeline expansion at a time when the public is demanding protection of natural resources and bold action on climate change. By 2022, we're unlikely to have any permanent Arctic sea ice left. We have 3 years to reverse course, perhaps 11 years to completely transition off fossil fuels. True leadership makes difficult decisions in times of crisis. This is an emergency of epic proportions. We appeal to you to stop the PennEast pipeline now,” said Stephanie Scherr, Director, ECHO Action NH.

“One of the main reasons that people flock to Bucks County for weekends, vacations and days of pleasure is because we have the Delaware River as one of our borders. The building of pipelines to support the Natural Gas Industry is the exact opposite of what will preserve the beauty of this River and the towns along it, the jobs that are dependent on it, and the sanity that living in a place that values clean water bestows on its inhabitants. Build PennEast and the rest of this industry will follow and we will all regret that day. Stop it now!,” said Sharon Furlong, Bucks Environmental Action and Bucks County Sierra Club.

“The Delaware River Basin is one of the most important natural resources in our region and must be protected from the threat of unneeded fossil fuel pipelines. The DRBC has the authority to stop projects that would cause significant and irreparable harm to the river and its tributaries. We join in urging them to use it in their pending review of the proposed PennEast pipeline,” said Tom Gilbert, campaign director, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Rethink Energy NJ.

“Pollution destroying recreation - money over public health and safety. It is time for legal action to claim our constitutional and civic rights to stop the increasing pollution of the Delaware Estuary. Our constitutional rights to clean air water and earth, our economic rights to be protected, our civil rights, our leadership rights (by the people and for the people), our health, and our lives and values in general are all being illegally violated by the United States government allowance of money being more important than the people. Kids grow up thinking that our representatives in congress, senate, president etc. are "leaders". They are not. We the
people are the leaders. It is time for the people to get back in partnership and stop this or tomorrow's children will suffer,” said Richard Hunt McNutt, President, Tidewaters Gateway Partnership Inc.

"The Centre County Green Party is opposed to the Penn East pipeline because it will carry climate challenging fracked gas, some of which may be extracted from our county," said Doug Mason, Chair, Centre County Green Party.

“As citizens living in Luzerne County, the starting point for the Penneast, we have some serious safety and environmental concerns about the pipeline. First is the safety of the 3,400 children attending the 4 Dallas Schools, K through 12th grade that is just 1,400 feet from the start point. The Penneast will connect to a 3 pipeline hub that contains the Transco and two others. We have never been told what the blast radius would be if a pipeline in that hub were to explode. Secondly, it will pass through a neighborhood to rock quarries in Plains Township where they blast the rock with explosives. Houses in the vicinity have cracked foundations and broken windows because of the explosions, and the pipeline will be closer than the blasting than those houses,” said Scott Cannon, Action Together. “Finally, the section where the pipeline is to cross the Susquehanna River in Wyoming is peppered with very shallow and poorly mapped mine shafts. The area is famous for the Knox Mind Disaster of 1959 when 12 miners were killed from digging too close to the river bed. The event put an end to the coal era of the Wyoming Valley. These are just some of the issues in 6 miles of a 120 mile pipeline, which we feel is not worth the risk.”

"The data and science are clear: pipelines pollute water and fossil fuel buildout is a climate threat to peoples’ lives. By allowing this pipeline, DRBC and state governors are saying 'yes, please' to more pollution and climate chaos," said Melissa Troutman, Earthworks Research & Policy Analyst.

The PennEast pipeline will cross through multiple protected streams, fragment forests, and inflict significant and irreparable damage to our wetlands and communities. It is proposed to cross Special Protection designated reaches of the Lower Delaware River, and is also proposed to cross under the F.E.Walter and Beltzville reservoirs and several existing recreation project areas listed in the DRBC's Comprehensive Plan.

View the letter at this link.

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Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Sourland Conservancy
Bucks County Concerned Citizens Against the Pipelines
Holland Township Citizens Against the PennEast Pipeline
NJ Conservation Foundation ~ Lower Saucon Township
Hopewell Township Citizens Against the PennEast Pipeline
Mohawk Canoe Club ~ HALT ~ Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition
Patriots From The Oil & Gas Shales ~ SuperNatural Salon and Spa
Cross Country nurseries ~ People Over Pipelines
Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition of Luzerne County, PA
Bucks Environmental Action ~ Bucks County Sierra Club
Bucks Environmental Defenders ~ 350.org Bucks County
David Pringle Associates ~ Clean Water Action
Straus Associates Landscape Architecture ~ Indivisible
Lambertville/New Hope
Achy Acres Farm ~ Williams Township Historical Society
Save Carbon County ~ Into the Garden/WDVR FM
Cooks Creek Watershed Association ~ M B Enterprises, LLC
Lebanon Pipeline Awareness ~ Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
Omega-Alpha Recycling Systems
Plains Township Residents Against Penn East Pipeline
United For Action ~ Friends of Horseshoe Bend Park
FreshWater Accountability Project Ohio ~ DCS ~ Concerned Residents of Oxford
Action Together NEPA ~ Heights Meditation ~ BCMAC
Genesis Farm ~ Sanderson Architectural ~ 350.Philadelphia
Mid-Hudson Sierra Club ~ Tidewaters Gateway Partnership
Marcellus Report ~ Alexhakinge Creek, LLC ~ Voters Of Watchung
Catskill Mountainkeeper ~ National Canoe Safety Patrol
Fry's Run Watershed Assn. (FRWA) ~ Brandau Construction
Citizens Against the Pipeline in Lambertville City ~ Adams Christmas Trees
M. Elaine Adams Photography ~ Pax Christi Greensburg
Be the Change ~ Sustainable McDonough
Central Jersey Environmental Defenders ~ Earthkeeper Health Resources
Sussex Health and Environmental Network of Delaware
ECHO Action: #FossilFree603 ~ Responsible Drilling Alliance (RDA)
Project CoffeeHouse ~ Chester County Environmental Association (CCEA)
SCRAM ~ Austelle Foundation ~ Centre County Green Party
Bethlehem Boating Club ~ Capuchin Franciscan
NJ Sierra Club ~ NJ Industrial Union Council
Bucks County Audubon Society ~ Chesapeake Bay Yacht Clubs Association
D&R Canal Watch ~ Trout Unlimited
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Washington Crossing Audubon Society
Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy ~ Bucks County Green Party
Neighbors Against the Gas Plants ~ PDA NJ ~ Covered Bridge Trail Association
Williams Township CCAP ~ Whole Earth Investments
Friends for the Abbott Marshlands ~ Angelica Creek Watershed Assoc.
Greater Lycoming Habitat for Humanity ~ Indivisible Northampton County
Frenchtown Environmental Commission ~ Friends of Heinz Refuge
Allegheny County Clean Air Now ~ Broad Wing Farm LLC
Save Our Streams PA ~ Berks Gas Truth ~ Earthworks
Sunbeam General Store ~ The Watershed Institute
Newton Creek Watershed Association ~ Bennett Farm Services
Business Alliance for the Future ~ DiBianca Family Foundation
Eckelmann Bros. Construction ~ Esprit Decor
Karas Business Support Services ~ Paracomm Consulting
Savidge Farm and Housekeeping Services ~ The Praemia Group
Green Amendments For the Generations

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Governor of New York State
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John Carney
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Tatnall Building
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Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania and DRBC Commissioner
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Stringent Review of PennEast Pipeline Project Pursuant to State Law & DRBC Authority

May 2, 2019

Dear Governor Murphy, Governor Cuomo, Governor Wolf, and Governor Carney:

You all have significant decisionmaking authority with regard to the proposed PennEast pipeline project. As Commissioners of the Delaware River Basin Commission (“DRBC”) you collectively have extensive regulatory authority with regard to the review and decisionmaking over the PennEast application to construct approximately 120 miles of pipeline through New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In addition, Governors Murphy and Wolfe, your environmental agencies have an irreplaceable obligation pursuant to the Clean Water Act to ensure compliance with all applicable state water quality standards.

The PennEast pipeline is proposed to cross Special Protection designated reaches of the Lower Delaware River. Community members have provided significant comment on the impacts of such a crossing. The pipeline is proposed to cross under the F.E.Walter and Beltzville reservoirs and several existing recreation project areas listed in the Commission’s Comprehensive Plan. It would disturb more than 25 acres of wetlands, and would require a special-use permit for pipelines constructed within floodways per the Commission’s Floodplain Regulations. In New Jersey, PennEast proposes 38 crossings of pristine C1 streams that drain into the Delaware River and Delaware & Raritan Canal. In Pennsylvania PennEast will require 1,574 acres of earth disturbance; will impact over 15,000 linear feet of stream with EV, HQ, MF, CWF designations; and will impact over 35 acres of floodplain and over 43 acres of wetlands. PennEast has not demonstrated that it can cross these protected streams and wetlands without damaging water quality. The combination of steep slopes and hard bedrock that must be overcome in a number of these crossings, particularly in New Jersey, make protection of water quality nearly impossible.

DRBC has broad authority over pipelines such as PennEast that will inflict significant impacts on the water resources of the basin and should ensure it exercises the full extent of that authority. Every one of the DRBC watershed states has an important stake in the outcome of the PennEast project, and the precedent that it sets for strong and meaningful DRBC review and decisionmaking. The undersigned groups and individuals urge each and every Commissioner to take seriously your decisionmaking role over this pipeline as a Commissioner of the DRBC. Congress has granted DRBC broad authority under its
congressionally approved compact, we expect you to use that authority to protect our water resources and communities from PennEast. Based upon the public record on the PennEast pipeline, it is clear that DRBC has the authority to reject the PennEast pipeline for lack of complete and accurate information, because of the significant and irreparable harm to the water resources of the basin, and/or because of the harmful impacts to the natural resources of impacted states.

The application materials, as submitted by PennEast to DRBC and to the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, do not demonstrate that the pipeline meets the requirements of law. Members of the public -- through comment, photo documentation, and expert reports -- have demonstrated the many scientific and factual deficiencies in the PennEast proposal. These deficiencies are found in the materials submitted to the DRBC as well as to the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In response, New Jersey has rejected the PennEast application until such time as it can provide full and accurate information. Pennsylvania and DRBC should similarly close the file on PennEast for failing to provide full and accurate information.

In addition, based on the data and information that has been submitted to the DRBC and to state and federal agencies, we can already see that the proposed PennEast pipeline will have a substantial effect on the water resources of the Delaware River basin, and on the natural environments and communities of New Jersey and in Pennsylvania. This information demonstrates that PennEast, as proposed, simply cannot meet the legal requirements of the DRBC, of New Jersey or of Pennsylvania and should be rejected. When the New Jersey application is re-filed, the state should use its clear authority to reject approvals for PennEast -- it is clear they will not be able to meet the requirements of the laws of the state. When the Pennsylvania application materials are complete, it too should reject PennEast as it is clear the pipeline will not be able to meet the requirements of state law. DRBC should immediately close the file on PennEast for lack of full and accurate information and when the time for substantive decision making arrives, the DRBC should deny a docket to PennEast as it is clear the proposed pipeline will inflict irreparable harm on the water resources of the basin.

Respectfully submitted,

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Bristol, PA
Caroline Katmann, Executive Director, Sourland Conservancy, Hopewell, NJ
Arianne Elinich, Founder, Bucks County Concerned Citizens Against the Pipelines, Coopersburg, PA
Lorraine Crown, Holland Township Citizens Against the PennEast Pipeline, Milford, NJ
Michele Byers, Executive Director, NJ Conservation Foundation, Far Hills, NJ
Priscilla Deleon, President, Lower Saucon Township, Bethlehem, PA
Patty Cronheim, President, Hopewell Township Citizens Against the PennEast Pipeline, Pennington, NJ
Christopher Meyers, Environment Chair, Mohawk Canoe Club, Bloomsbury, NJ
Jacqueline Evans, Trustee, HALT, Stockton, NJ
Doug O’Malley, Director, Environment New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ
James Schulte, Treasurer, National Canoe Safety Patrol, Harleysville, PA
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Philip Brandau, Brandau Construction, Upper Black Eddy, PA
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Irvin Adams, Partner, Adams Christmas Trees, Elverson, PA
Elaine Adams, Partner, M. Elaine Adams Photography, Elverson, PA
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Steven Ellsworth, Board Member, Sustainable McDonough, Oxford, NY
Linda Powell, Outreach Coordinator, Central Jersey Environmental Defenders, Somerset, NJ
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Christopher Edginton, Community Coalition Member, Sussex Health and Environmental Network Of Delaware
Stephanie Scherr, Director, Echo Action: #Fossilfree603, Fitzwilliam, NH
Robert Cross, President, Responsible Drilling Alliance (RDA), Williamsport, PA
Barbara Jarmoska, President, Project Coffeehouse, Montoursville, PA
Rachel Joy, Member, Chester County Environmental Association (CCEA), Media, PA
George Billard, Co-Founder, SCRAM, Eldred, NY
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Carol Gay, President, NJ Industrial Union Council, Brick, NJ
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Lynn Robinson, Director, Neighbors Against the Gas Plants, Philadelphia, PA
Virginia Mickle, Treasurer, Covered Bridge Trail Association, Sergeantsville, NJ
Linda Heindel, Member, Williams Township CCAP, Easton, PA
Joyce Moore, President, Whole Earth Investments, Emmaus, PA
Mary Leck, Executive Committee, Friends for The Abbott Marshlands, Kendall Park, NJ
Barry Pounder, Volunteer, Angelica Creek Watershed Association, Sinking Spring, PA
Lauri Moon, Greater Lycoming Habitat for Humanity, Williamsport, PA
Joe Guest, Volunteer, Indivisible Northampton County, Easton, PA
James Meade, Commissioner, Frenchtown Environmental Commission, Frenchtown, NJ
Madilyn Schwer, AmeriCorps Vista, Friends of Heinz Refuge, Philadelphia, PA
Kathleen Krebs, Rn, Co-Founder, Allegheny County Clean Air Now, Pittsburgh, PA
Anne Hasz, Owner, Broad Wing Farm LLC, Morgantown, PA
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c.
Major General Jeffrey L. Milhorn, DRBC Commissioner
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