



February 9, 2016

Highland Town Board.  
Town Hall, Town of Highland  
P.O. Box 138  
4 Proctor Road (Rt. 32)  
Eldred, NY 12732

*Submitted via email: [townclerk@townofhighlandny.com](mailto:townclerk@townofhighlandny.com)*

***Re: Proposed Millennium Pipeline Company Eastern System Upgrade***

Dear Highland Town Board,

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is opposed to the Millennium Pipeline Company's (Millennium) proposed Eastern System Upgrade project. We are concerned about the detrimental environmental, health and economic impacts of the proposal as well as the future expansion of the Millennium pipeline system it may be intended to induce and/or support.

We write to suggest that the town of Highland pass a resolution of opposition to the proposed upgrade. We also suggest that you reach out to neighboring communities to ask that they do the same as the impacts of this proposal, and the potential pipeline expansion it might advance, are regional issues in need of regional opposition.

Compressor stations are known to emit toxic and carcinogenic emissions as part of their normal operations. Known emissions from pipeline compressors include, but certainly are not limited to, volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—such as formaldehyde, benzene, and styrene; hazardous air pollutants (HAPs); ultrafine particulate matter (PM); and hydrocarbons. Health effects from these emissions include chronic respiratory issues, cardiovascular issues and heart attacks, neurological issues, cancer, and reproductive and development toxicity. In addition, compressor stations, including those processing Marcellus Shale gas, are known to release radioactive material into the environment, increasing the community's exposure to carcinogens.

Compressor stations also emit noise and vibrations continuously, day and night. The noise emitted is often above allowable standards, especially during regular "blowdowns". Chronic exposure to low frequency noise can lead to Vibroacoustic Disease, which causes a range of serious health impacts—including thickening of cardiovascular structures, psychiatric disturbances, and infections. Low frequency noise can travel 5 miles.

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The regular intentional emission discharges and uncontrolled leaks from compressor stations pose long-term and short-term health impacts for wildlife and humans alike, including cancer, nervous system damage, and reproductive effects—in addition to releasing potent and long-lasting greenhouse gases.

The health risks that emissions and noise pose are even greater for vulnerable populations, such as children and pregnant women. Eldred high school is just four miles away from the proposed site. Also nearby are camps for kids, including Camp Simcha, whose mission is to serve children with cancer and other blood disorders – exposing these children with compromised immune systems to the impacts and pollution emitted by the compressor is nothing short of despicable.

The environmental damage of the proposed upgrade would come in many forms including damage to the forest in and around the footprint of the compressor and associated roadways, air pollution, impacts to water resources, and habitat harms.

In addition, compressors bring with them the risk of accidents and explosions that, if they happen, can inflict significant damage. In the event of a fire or explosion at the station, impacts to the human community and natural environments could be catastrophic. The mere knowledge of this potential, along with the adverse environmental and community impacts of a compressor, harms peoples’ sense of safety and well being and adversely impacts their lives.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network believes the addition of the two compressors and additional pipeline proposed as part of the Eastern System Upgrade may be part of a larger expansion yet to be disclosed. (See attached letter submitted for the FERC pre-filing docket). In addition, any infrastructure that expands the transmission of shale gas increases the pressure for, and the devastation of, shale gas extraction that is being inflicted upon an increasing number of communities and environments.

The damage that Millennium has already inflicted on neighboring communities, including Minisink and Hancock, through smaller compressor stations than what is being proposed in Highland, should serve as more than enough warning to Highland.

- In Minisink, families living within a two-mile radius of the compressor station have been experiencing asthma, chronic nose bleeds, headaches, and rashes since the station became active. The community is now the subject of one of the first formal health studies examining the impacts of compressor stations. These negative health impacts have even forced one family to abandon their home.
- In the Town of Hancock, Millennium acquired the property that was eventually used for their compressor station after their pipeline expansion activities damaged the foundation and septic system of the previous owner’s house.
- The Town of Cochecton, NY accused the pipeline company of leaving behind \$1 million in damages to county roads after their 2008 pipeline expansion project—which Millennium denied.

While Millennium is attempting to depict the proposed upgrade as an economic benefit for the community—the truth is that compressors bring with them significant economic harm. Property values surrounding compressor stations have been shown to drop, often by as much as 50%. Associated health impacts bring health care costs and even inability to work, putting additional strain on the community and local economy. The possible construction jobs that Millennium would offer the community would be short term and high risk. Heavy truck traffic can also cause millions of dollars in damage to local roads.

For these reasons, we ask that the town pass a resolution of opposition to the proposed upgrade and reach out to neighboring communities to ask that they do the same as the impacts of this proposal, and the potential pipeline expansion it might advance, are regional issues in need of region-wide opposition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maya K. van Rossum" followed by a horizontal line.

Maya K. van Rossum  
the Delaware Riverkeeper