

TOWNSHIP OF KINGWOOD

Environmental Commission Meeting:
Fourth Tuesday of Each Month – 7:30pm
Municipal Building:
Corner of Rt. 519 & Oak Grove Rd.
Fax: (908) 996-7753



Address Reply To:
Cynthia Keller, EC Secretary
P.O. Box 199
Baptistown, NJ 08803-0199
Phone: (908) 996-4276

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street Northeast, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Docket CP15-558-000 – Proposed PennEast Pipeline Project
Request withdrawal of DEIS and/or extension of comment period

September 11, 2016

Dear Ms. Bose,

The Kingwood Township Environmental Commission is submitting these comments in opposition to the proposed PennEast Pipeline Docket CP15-558-000. Kingwood Township Environmental Commission is an intervenor in this matter and Kingwood Township is an impacted landowner on the proposed route. Both the construction and the long term functioning and maintenance of this pipeline would put our environmental and cultural resources and human health and safety at risk.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released by FERC on July 22, 2016 does not accurately describe Kingwood’s natural and cultural resources or evaluate the potential impacts and risks to the environmental and human and safety. It does not fully evaluate alternatives, including route changes that would avoid our sensitive resources or renewable energy and energy conservation. Therefore, it does not fulfill FERC’s NEPA obligation.

A preliminary review of the DEIS reveals the FREQUENT admission that PennEast has not completed multiple (at least 80) required studies and analyses. We have previously submitted many comments to PennEast and FERC through the pre-filing and filing processes and it is apparent that this information has been ignored and our concerns have not been addressed in any substantive way. We have submitted our Environmental Resource Inventory to the Docket.* We suggest this as a *starting point* for researching the environmental resources and evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed PennEast pipeline project.

In each section, FERC’s DEIS then goes on to conclude in every instance, that, even though they have no information on which to make ANY conclusion, they determine that there will be insignificant impacts. Accurate conclusions CANNOT be drawn on incomplete, or rather non-existent information. The safety of our residents and our water supply; our economic, environmental and cultural resources; the value and use of our open space and farmland; and our residents’ constitutional rights to their property are at risk from this unneeded pipeline. Therefore, we insist that FERC withdraw the PennEast DEIS until

PennEast has completed and submitted the required studies. Stakeholders must then be allowed a reasonable time to evaluate them.

We want to express further dissatisfaction with FERC's disregard for its responsibility to provide access to its documents and the ability of the public to comment on such documents. A few hours after announcing the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on July 22, 2016, the entire FERC website became non-operational. The FERC website remained inert until sometime Monday morning. This prevented the public from downloading these critically important documents for three days out of an already too-short 45 day comment period. For the majority of people who work weekdays, the loss of an entire weekend during which they may have dedicated time to the review of this obese document, is especially significant. From the beginning of this proposed project, citizens have often been frustrated by FERC's website's frequent malfunctions, which we find unacceptable and contrary to public interest. Even after that first weekend of the comment period, residents have continued to complain about being unable to access FERC website. One of the important requirements of NEPA is for a public input into the project.

In fact, we have found your entire process for public discourse to be lacking. The public hearings on the DEIS were scheduled only three weeks after most people could even obtain a copy of the document. Public participation was further thwarted by the strange "public meetings" which were not operated in public, but instead took people one by one to speak to support staff holding a recording device, instead of in a public forum in front of our peers and FERC staff who we actually wanted to communicate with. We did not feel as if our concerns were being heard.

Furthermore, PennEast filed an additional 300+ page filing, August 8, 2016, which is 18 days after the submission of the DEIS and more about a week ago. The 45-day public comment period was already insufficient for a thorough review of the 1200+ page DEIS. We request that FERC extend the public comment period by at least 60 days to permit a more reasonable time period for stakeholders and their experts to review and comment on this high volume of material.

In conclusion, FERC must withdraw the DEIS immediately, wait for PennEast to submit all the necessary documentation and studies, and re-release the DEIS after making an unbiased evaluation of all the information. FERC must ensure that the public has access to the online functions of downloading and submitting documents to the docket; and finally, at a later date after release of a completed DEIS, the comment period must be adequate and fair to the people whose land PennEast proposes to condemn. If a situation again occurs where substantive changes or information are made available after the start of the comment period, the clock must re-start to allow evaluation of this new information on top of the prior submittal.

Thank you for your full consideration of Kingwood Township's comments.

Sincerely,

The Kingwood Township Environmental Commission

CC: Kingwood Township Committee
Congressman Leonard Lance
Senator Robert Menendez
Senator Cory Booker

Assemblyman John DiMaio
Assemblyman Erik Peterson
Senator Michael J. Doherty
Hunterdon County Freeholders

* Kingwood Township Environmental Commission. 09/25/2015. *Comment of Kingwood Township Environmental Commission on Resource Reports 1, 4, 5, and 10 under PF15-1*. Submittal 20150925-5008 to FERC DOCKET PF15-1. <http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/common/OpenNat.asp?fileID=13995592>