

For Immediate Release

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October 10, 2017

Community Candlelight Vigil for Schuylkill County Farmers and Families Being Harmed by Transco/Williams' Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline Construction - Wed, Oct 11 at 6pm

Pine Grove, PA — Despite three years of strong community opposition, packed hearings, extensive public comment, and landowner resistance, federal and state regulators and Governor Tom Wolf have given permit approvals to permit the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline construction to begin in Schuylkill County and beyond.

The nearly 200-mile pipeline path — deemed a short cut by many opposing it — would cut through mostly greenfield rural areas — properties that do not currently have an existing pipeline right of way (ROW). According to a Sierra Club commissioned expert report, the pipeline would directly affect 45,000 residents and place 19,000 homes in the evacuation zone (<http://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/atlantic-sunrise-pipeline>). Pipeline opponents believe the pipeline will exacerbate fracking and health impacts upstream living in the Marcellus shale zone. According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the pipeline about 106 miles (53%) of the soils along the proposed route are deemed prime farmland. An expert report by Schmid & Company commissioned by Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness and Delaware Riverkeeper Network found multiple deficiencies and discrepancies in the state pipeline applications for Schuylkill County. The DEP itself noted deficiencies in Williams' proposed pipeline operator applications. Still, the department went on to issue the permits. 18.5 miles of 42 inch diameter pipeline is to be constructed through 6 townships of the County totaling about 392 acres of disturbance. The pipeline would cut across 30 streams and 27 wetlands in Schuylkill County according to the operator's application and permits.

Eminent domain proceedings over the last months helped give Williams the green light to begin construction, legally allowing Transco Williams to 'take' local people's land for pipeline construction and the placement of a permanent easement. The pipeline would move Marcellus shale gas from unconventional natural gas wells in the fracking region of Pennsylvania to Maryland for export, and supply gas plants in North Carolina and Florida.

Residents and local community groups continue to build and resist the construction of this pipeline project up and down the 10-county pipeline path, including an action yesterday by Lancaster Against Pipelines that organized a block party at a construction entrance along a public road for several hours. Calls by over 200 organizations including SPA and DRN for an investigation into the federal body that approves large gas pipeline projects — the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) — also persist ([Bit.ly/DossierofFERCAbuse](http://bit.ly/DossierofFERCAbuse)).

“As a local community group that has been engaged in opposing this pipeline since its inception, we are organizing this vigil to support the local farmers and landowners that are being faced with the construction of this pipeline as Williams begins. SPA is also organizing additional community watch-dogging trainings so landowners and concerned neighbors can document

damage occurring on their land so fines can be assessed. Rural neighbors help one another in times of need. That is what our goal is on Wednesday: to be there during this time of trauma that farmers especially feel with their strong connection to the land.” Leah Zerbe, Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness.

“There is an ever growing body of science (over 700 journal articles) that clearly indicate what concerned communities and environmental organizations have urged all along - this industry is too risky to our health and the long term health of our water and air to continue. It cannot be regulated safely. We need a ban on fracking and all the infrastructure harms like pipelines that it brings to protect the rights of every Pennsylvanian that is afforded to us in our state constitution.” <http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/> - Faith Zerbe, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

The Pennsylvania Medical Society in late 2016 called for a moratorium on new shale gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing in Pennsylvania based on this science and New York has banned the practice entirely citing the literature.

The vigil is being organized by Schuylkill Pipeline Awareness, a grassroots, all-volunteer group of residents and concerned people who are concerned about the impacts of shale gas infrastructure and pipelines impacting rural communities in Schuylkill County and beyond. For anyone interested in getting involved or learning more about SPA or plugging into our future efforts, please contact schuylkillconcernedresidents@gmail.com or contact Leah Zerbe. You can also join the SPA Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/758856534157741/>

Photo Press Opportunity: Neighbors and vigil goers will light beeswax candles and place a sympathy and solidarity wreath on one family farm that is being cut by the construction of the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline project. There will also be signs displayed. Speakers will highlight the threats Schuylkill County faces due to pipeline construction. This ceremony is a rain or shine event. A tent will be provided if inclement weather persists but please bring along an umbrella. The concerned public is invited to attend the vigil on the farm and this is a family friendly and child friendly ceremony. If you join us please be sure to park in designated areas only as not to compact the sensitive farm soils and fields to respect this private farm property where we have been invited to gather. The vigil will be held at a family farm located at 1036 Oak Grove Road, Pine Grove, PA 17963 (Schuylkill County) beginning at 6pm, Wed Oct 11, 2017.

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