

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2017

Cheryl LaFleur
Acting Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Acting Chairman LaFleur:

We write in regard to the pipeline proposed by PennEast Pipeline Company, LLC (Docket No. CP15-558-000). The roughly 110-mile, 36-inch diameter interstate natural gas pipeline route would include approximately 36 miles in New Jersey through a dozen municipalities from Holland Township to Hopewell Township. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected to be published by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in April 2017. As you may know, residents, municipalities, and public entities have raised a number of concerns with the Draft EIS regarding the potential environmental impact of this project.

As you know, the Commission has a requirement to evaluate the public need for the project and weigh that need against the accompanying environmental impacts. We are concerned that the environmental impacts are not yet fully understood.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has raised significant concerns regarding incomplete information on the “direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed action on the environment and public health.” The EPA recommends the applicant present approaches to mitigate the leakage of methane along the pipeline, outline plans to minimize drilling risks, and provide a more complete assessment of multiple surveys, data collection, and analysis.

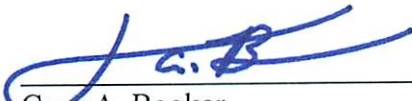
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has provided detailed comments calling for a more comprehensive understanding of the project’s impact on federally listed species. For example, FWS has requested that the applicant complete more in depth habitat surveys for the federally threatened Bog Turtle, as well as the federally endangered Indiana Bat.

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) raises an issue of particular concern to me regarding arsenic. DOI cites “confusing” and “contradictory” statements made by the applicant with regard to the risk of arsenic exposure to groundwater at certain locations along the pipeline route. Comments submitted by a professor of Geoscience at Princeton University and a research geochemist/hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey raise serious concerns about the potential for groundwater discharge that contains levels of arsenic that will likely exceed the Surface Water Quality Standard for arsenic in streamwater. DOI echoes those concerns in calling

for the applicant to further evaluate the potential exposure by conducting a comprehensive well sampling plan. While the applicant acknowledges the potential for exposure to arsenic, it has not yet put forth a comprehensive plan to monitor exposure and mitigate impacts such that New Jersey residents can be confident that they would not be exposed to harmful levels of arsenic.

A project of this scope, which affects approximately 300 property owners, traverses roughly 255 water body crossings, and costs over \$1 billion, requires a comprehensive evaluation to determine if the public need outweighs the environmental and community impacts. As FERC works to complete the Final EIS, we respectfully request that these concerns, voiced by our constituents and state and federal agencies, regarding land use and environmental and public health impacts are thoroughly evaluated and addressed. We appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator