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Canal Walk and Rally Show Opposition to PennEast Pipeline Continues to Grow

Event Comes in Wake of Controversial Environmental Statement by Feds

Riegelsville, PA – Affected landowners, environmental advocates, and concerned citizens rallied against the PennEast pipeline today after a two-mile walk along the Delaware River canal towpath near Durham Furnace where the boat that famously transported George Washington across the river regularly served the war effort by carrying cannon balls.

More than two years after the pipeline was first proposed, opposition to the project has continued to grow.

“This ‘Walk Along the Canal’ event gives all of us who care about keeping our water and environment safe a way to come together and speak out,” said **Alice Orrichio of HALT - PennEast and an organizer of the walk**. “We the people sometimes feel disempowered and disenfranchised by our own Government as was the case with the most recent so called “Open Public Hearings” orchestrated by The Federal Regulatory Energy Commission. FERC changed the layout of the hearing just for us. It went from a public open mic speak-out, to a venue of herding us into a closed room one by one to speak our concerns individually and privately to a FERC appointed stenographer. What FERC and PennEast still have not realized is that we are not going away. We are a growing force and this pipeline will not be built.”

“We will not allow our waters to be degraded, our lands razed, and the health and safety of our communities compromised, for the sake of the financial benefit of private corporations,” said **Arienne Elinich of Pennsylvania Earth Guardians and one of the event organizers**. “Our elected officials need to acknowledge the truth - that fracked gas infrastructure build-out is not in the best interest, or to the benefit of, our communities. We will continue to stand strong with water protectors across the nation to bring an end to this era of fossil foolishness. The tipping point has come and the time to incentivize renewable energy across the nation is *now*.”

Today’s demonstration was directed at PennEast and its partners, as well as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for its failure to put the interests of the public before those of the industry.

“While FERC’s approval of the PennEast pipeline is a foregone conclusion, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Delaware River Basin Commission, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers still have to weigh in. We are here today to make clear to those agencies that we will not accept their following in FERC’s rubber stamp footprint,” said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network**. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network has already filed a challenge against FERC’s review of PennEast in federal court, claiming the FERC’s biased process is a violation of the U.S. Constitution.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued its Draft Environmental Impact Statement in July, kicking off a public comment period. The Commission’s report was widely panned by citizens and governmental agencies alike for its failure to acknowledge many of the concerns that commenters had submitted during its review.

“PennEast is an environmental disaster that will tear an ecological scar through the Delaware River watershed and a climate disaster that’s doubling down on a dirty fossil fuel,” said **Doug O’Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey**. “We are going to stop PennEast because of a massive public uprising in both states that has united citizens, federal and even state agencies. We are walking to protect our open spaces and waterways and to tell PennEast to take a hike.”

“The people along the route, the towns along the route, and the governmental agencies such as the EPA all say NO to this pipeline. What part of the word NO does PennEast not understand? This dangerous and unnecessary pipeline threatens our open space, drinking water, and safety. We’re coming together to tell PennEast to get the FERC out of our Valley!” said **Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club**.

“Federal environmental and state consumer government agencies like property rights activists and environmentalists can see through PSE&G’s and these other Penn East dirty gas utilities’

smoke screen. They're blowing smoke in more ways than one. It's unfortunate but reality that they will never do the right thing on their own so we just have to make them do it," said **David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director of Clean Water Action.**

"The proposed PennEast pipeline would destroy ecosystems , historic resources, residents' livelihoods and NJ's open space program. - for no reason except greed. We will not let that happen," said **Caroline Katmann of the Sourland Conservancy.**

"PennEast has threatened to divide communities, take landowner's property through eminent domain and deliver profits at the expense of public good, but communities and organizations all along the pipeline route-- from Luzerne to Mercer County-- are united in their resolve to oppose it," said **Tara Zrinski, local coordinator for Food and Water Watch.** "This unprecedented opposition has awakened an environmental consciousness that is screaming to the powers that the gas is unnecessary, the pipeline is unwanted and PennEast is not welcome here!"

"Numerous sources all point to just one conclusion about PennEast", said **Michael Spille, Founder of West Amwell Citizens Against the Pipeline.** "Market studies done by several private organizations, studies from the the NJ Rate Counsel, and even the SEC filings of the PennEast owners themselves all agree: this pipeline is not needed. And that makes the endless litany of impacts in our region all the more egregious".

"The pipeline is just another example of big corporations ruining our environment and leaving us to pick up the pieces" says **Linda Christman, spokesperson for Save Carbon County, a concerned citizens group from Carbon County, PA.**

"Mr. Ralph Izzo, CEO, PSEG – do the right thing for the communities you serve by **withdrawing from PennEast now!**" said **Vince DiBianca, Chair, HALT – PennEast (Homeowners Against Land Taking), Impacted Homeowner and PSEG Shareholder.** In addition to PSEG, the projects partners include NJR Pipeline Company, SJI Midstream, Southern Gas Company, Spectra Energy Partners, and UGI Energy Services.

For participants in today's walk, the fight to stop the PennEast pipeline has always been about a lot more than sparing one property or protecting one community.

"Mother Earth's purpose has been to sustain and care for her children, those with and without a voice, since time immemorial. It is long overdue that we in turn take care of her," said **Lew Hastings, Founder, Native Now Foundation and Host of the Red Road Radio Show.**

One of the most impassioned and vocal opponents of the pipeline since it was first proposed is, at 11, also one of the youngest.

“It would be a shame if we destroyed the homes of our family , our friends, and our wildlife, just to transport gas that we don't need,” said **Kaia Elinich of Bucks County CCAP (*Concerned Citizens Against the Pipeline*) and PA Earth Guardians**. “If we really need more energy than we already have, we could be using solar panels or other forms of alternative energy.”

“Thomas Paine was speaking of the phase of the Revolutionary War prior to Washington’s crossing of the Delaware when he said, ‘These are the times that try men's souls.’ He could have been speaking about the present day when we are confronted with the greatest threat to our survival, climate change. Facing the problem squarely as corporations and government officials remain willfully oblivious is trying to all who oppose the PennEast pipeline, but we will prevail, as Washington ultimately did,” said **Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth**.

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