

FERC – Please consider the following with regard to the proposed PennEast pipeline.

Pre-filing Docket number PF15-1:

I would like to offer the following comments and observations on the proposed PennEast pipeline on behalf of the West Amwell Township Environmental Commission:

The proposed route of the buried pipeline goes directly through the Sourland Mountain region. This 90 square-mile region is characterized by a fragile ecological balance and is the largest contiguous forest in Central New Jersey.

Available biological data and pertinent scientific literature highlight the unique attributes that make the Sourland Mountain region so important as habitat, including:

- The Sourland Mountain region is one of only three major areas of unbroken habitat in New Jersey, at a strategic location mid-way between the Highlands and the Pinelands.
- The Sourland Mountain region is a critical stopover point for birds migrating along the Atlantic flyway and is one of New Jersey's top fall migration stopover sites.
- The region supports a great diversity of bird species, many of which are listed as either threatened or endangered, or are being tracked as species of special concern.
- Vernal pools, isolated wetland depressions seasonally filled with water, are common in the Sourlands. Some of these are known breeding sites for a number of herptiles who require these pools for egg laying and early life stages.
- The Sourland Mountain region may be the last refuge of some complex plant communities that once flourished in central New Jersey. Sixteen plant species that are either endangered or of special concern in NJ have been documented in the Sourlands to date.
- The Sourland Mountain region is a reservoir of biodiversity. Not only does it provide prime habitat and a critical migration stopover site, but because it supports larger populations of many organisms, it can serve as a source of genetic diversity for other populations of the same species that utilize small habitat patches nearby.
- Over 90 percent of the region is habitat for threatened and endangered species. Among the species are barred owl, bobcat, bobolink, Cooper's hawk, grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow, upland sandpipers, eagles, the wood turtle, the long tailed salamander, the Indiana bat, the wood turtle and other animals protected by federal and state law.

The Sourland Mountain region's biological diversity, critical forest, wetland and grassland habitats is seriously threatened by the irreparable damage to this critical ecosystem that would occur with the proposed PennEast pipeline.

The proposed route of the pipeline crosses the Alexauken Creek, a Category One (C-1) stream, and its tributaries, at least four times and crosses Peter's Brook, a tributary of a C-1 stream. C-1 streams are defined as waters protected by the State from any measurable changes in water quality because of their exceptional ecological function, habitat value, water supply significance and unique geology.

The Alexauken Creek is the principal surface water body in West Amwell, draining 15.12 square miles including 28.64 stream miles and 52.31 lake acres. It has been classified as a Category One waterbody based on its connection to the federally protected Delaware River, its value as habitat for threatened and endangered species and the relatively undeveloped nature of its watershed.

West Amwell has been the recipient of over \$800,000 in Federal Clean Water Act 319(h) grants provided to maintain and protect the Alexauken Creek, with the current grant addressing thermal impairment. Projects are ongoing to reduce the water temperature.

The pipeline will seriously negate the work/scope of the grant and it will very much degrade and compromise the water quality of this Category One stream, which is protected by the State of New Jersey and supported by Federal grant funding.

In addition, removal of trees and vegetation along creeks, streams and waterways will result in the loss of sediment filtration, thereby causing sediment buildup in the Alexauken Creek, which flows into the Delaware River, a major source of drinking water for millions of NJ and PA residents.

The proposed pipeline route is in direct opposition to the West Amwell Township Master Plan which provides for the preservation, conservation and utilization of natural resources, including open space, water supply, forests, soil, marshes, wetlands, rivers, and other waters, fisheries, endangered and threatened species wildlife and other resources.

The construction of the pipeline through the rock formations (diabase has been targeted through the Sourland Mountain) of West Amwell could cause serious damage to the well and septic systems throughout the township. West Amwell relies primarily on private wells as the source of drinking water. This water comes through fractures in the rock and is minimal at best. Blasting through diabase could cause these fracture lines to shift and could affect parcels located at a distance from the original blast operation.

For the above reasons the Environmental Commission of West Amwell Township vehemently opposes the construction of the PennEast pipeline.

Cathy Urbanski
Chair, West Amwell Township Environmental Commission

55 Rocktown Lambertville Road
Lambertville, NJ 08530
December 8, 2014

To the Federal Energy Regulation Commission:

Please consider the following with regard to the proposed PennEast pipeline in West Amwell Township, NJ.

Pre-filing Docket number PF15-1:

The proposed PennEast pipeline traverses farmlands and preserved farmlands. The preserved farmlands are owned by Robert Fulper II, a fourth-generation dairy farmer and owner of Fulper Family Farms, established in 1909 in West Amwell, New Jersey. The taxpayers of West Amwell have preserved this land with funds from West Amwell, the SADC (State Agricultural Development Committee) and the CADB (Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Committee).

The proposed pipeline also impacts farmlands of the Miller, Kiriluk, Runkle and Hunt families.

From Mr. Fulper as quoted in the Huffington Post, 11-21-14:

"In the 1940s and 50s, one of the gas companies, Texas Eastern, I believe, put a pipeline through a farm I rent through the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)," recalls Fulper, "and I definitely see extensive damage. The pipeline generates enough heat to change the temperature of the ground. When we have a hot, dry summer, those areas get severely damaged. And when I look at one of my yield maps, in that field of 10 acres, 2.3 acres show losses-- more than 20% of the field--yield drop can be as much as 30 or 40 bushels of corn. The problem is," adds Fulper, "that companies like PennEast might show concern in the beginning stages of the project, but over the years, a land owner or farmer has no right and the companies can just come in anytime and do repairs on the pipeline, causing damage to crops and ruining the soil."

Last year, without notifying Fulper, an emergency repair was made on the line that already runs through the SADC property Fulper rents. "They tore the ground up and didn't put the topsoil back. They dug up my crops and left the crops a mess, left rocks on top," he says. "The crop yield was zero. I called the SADC first. They didn't know anything about it. It took days to find out what happened. Finally, I got a little reimbursement, but not enough to cover the damage."

THEREFORE, the Agricultural Advisory Committee of West Amwell Township is in direct opposition to the proposed PennEast pipeline as it will pose irreparable damage to our farmland and preserved farmland, not just during pipeline construction, but for the foreseeable future.

THEREFORE, the Agricultural Advisory Committee of West Amwell Township urges the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to reject the PennEast pipeline application.

Chester Urbanski, Chair

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Document Content(s)

FERC Environmental Commission.PDF.....1-2

FERC for AAC2.PDF.....3-3