

Quittapahilla Watershed Association
8 East High Street, Annville PA 17003



May 31, 2016

Mr. Scott Williamson
Waterways & Wetlands Program
DEP South-Central Region
909 Elmerton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Email: scwilliams@pa.gov

Sent in PDF file via email

Dear Mr. Williamson:

We write on behalf of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association (QWA), a nonprofit community organization dedicated to cleaner water flowing from the Quittapahilla watershed to the Chesapeake Bay, to request that the PA-DEP schedule a public hearing on Williams / Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Company's (Williams/Transco) application for water obstruction and encroachment permits for its proposed Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline (FERC Docket No. CP15-138-00).

As you know, Williams/Transco's proposed Atlantic Sunrise pipeline would create a new "greenfield" right-of-way extending some 184 miles north-south across Pennsylvania, including approximately 15 miles across the Quittapahilla watershed. This new pipeline corridor is projected to cross through hundreds streams and wetlands in Pennsylvania. We in the QWA are very concerned about the potential negative environmental impacts to the Quittapahilla watershed of this proposed high-pressure, 42-inch diameter underground natural gas pipeline.

More specifically, our concerns for this project and reason we are requesting a public hearing include the following:

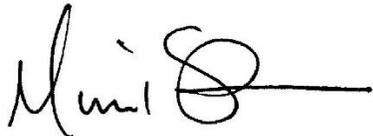
- Review of stream crossing plans shows that Williams/Transco does not intend to use horizontal directional drilling techniques beneath any of the streams and wetlands it intends to traverse. Instead it proposes to use open-trench methods, which as you know are substantially more environmentally damaging to streams and wetlands. Stream crossings in South-Central PA include not only the Quittapahilla Creek but the Swatara and Conewago creeks. All these waterways have been the subject of substantial and sustained restoration efforts by local watershed associations – including our own – over the past 15 to 20 years. Over the past two years, the QWA, in partnership with the Lebanon Valley Conservancy, has received nearly \$1 million in Growing Greener grants from the PA-DEP for stream restoration work. Our concern is that the positive water-quality benefits from these restoration efforts will be undermined and degraded by Williams/Transco's stream and wetland crossing plans.

- Current plans for the building of the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline using open-trench methods have a high likelihood of contributing substantially to increased erosion and sediment runoff in the Quittapahilla and other watersheds. Williams/Transco's plans to create a permanent, tree-free corridor to house the proposed pipeline include the riparian buffers along our waterways, including Quittapahilla Creek, that currently minimize erosion and sediment runoff into the Chesapeake Bay.
- The scale and scope of this proposed pipeline project require PA-DEP to consider not only this project's local impacts in discrete stream and wetland crossings, but its overall, cumulative impact along its entire 184-mile route. Larger, multi-state efforts to improve the quality of the water flowing into the Chesapeake Bay by minimizing erosion and runoff and preserving existing riparian buffers are directly threatened by this proposed pipeline project.

The foregoing represent only some of our deep and abiding concerns about this project. We are confident that many other organizations and individuals in South-Central PA harbor similar concerns. For these reasons we urge your office to schedule a public hearing on these questions, so that the public can voice its concerns and have its questions addressed by PA-DEP and Williams/Transco.

Thank you for receiving this urgent request.

Respectfully,



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