

Lebanon Pipeline Awareness
1594 Cumberland St, Suite 194
Lebanon PA 17042
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Ann Pinca, President
Michael Schroeder, Vice President
Megan Detter, Secretary
Ellie Salahub, Treasurer

Joseph J Buczynski, PE
Waterways and Wetlands Program Manager
Department of Environmental Protection
Northeast Regional Office
2 Public Square
Wilkes-Barre PA 18701
jbuczynski@pa.gov

RE: DEP's Chapter 105 Water Obstruction and Encroachment Permit for Williams Transco Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline-FERC Docket No. CP15-138

Dear Mr. Buczynski

The Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline, a greenfield construction proposal, is an unnecessary and unwarranted assault on our most precious resource, water. DEP cannot accept the project's adverse impacts from 327 river and stream crossings and 251 wetland crossings. Our state government cannot justify granting permits for a pipeline that is intended to move natural gas from Northeastern Pennsylvania to export facilities in Maryland and the Gulf States to fulfill a private company's foreign market contracts.^{1,2} We, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, declare and demand our Constitutional right, under Article 1 Section 27, to "pure water."

All Lebanon County streams eventually drain into the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay and all of these waterways except one small unnamed stream will be crossed by open trench methods. The resulting deleterious impacts to these streams will eventually be carried downstream to the highly impaired and vulnerable Chesapeake Bay.

The Quittapahilla Creek has been the focus of dedicated restoration projects through the work of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association (QWA).³ Since its founding in 1997, the QWA has successfully garnered numerous state grants to improve the water quality of the creek, which is now a popular trout fishing stream. The Quittapahilla Stream Restoration Project is just beginning its second phase, utilizing \$1million dollars in grants from state agencies to fund the project.

Ironically, this area of intense restoration work lies just upstream from the proposed Atlantic Sunrise pipeline crossing, which will utilize an open trench dam and pump process to cross the stream while also crossing a wetland-designated area. In addition, it is possible that blasting will be required to open the stream bed for the pipeline trench. When finished, the natural riparian buffer currently in place will be permanently altered, negatively impacting the stream's water quality now so carefully cultivated (by taxpayer dollars) upstream.

The Conewago Creek located in southern Lebanon County is another stream under intense restoration efforts. The Tri-County Conewago Creek Association⁴ organized in 2002 to 'mak[e] the Conewago Creek and its surrounding area a cleaner, healthier and more enjoyable place to live.'" Through the Conewago Creek Initiative⁵, this group provides valuable efforts into restoring the water quality of the Conewago Creek.

South Londonderry Township Supervisors, out of concern for the Conewago Creek, sent a letter to Transco's storm water engineering firm indicating that engineers contracted by the township, Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc., recommended boring under the stream to lessen the impacts of pipeline construction.⁶ However, the Conewago Creek is slated for open trench crossing, using either the dam and pump or flume process.

In particular, The Swatara Creek is Lebanon County's largest stream and its surface waters are one of two sources of drinking water for ten municipalities in Lebanon County.⁷ Transco cannot be allowed to cross the Swatara Creek using the highly impactful trench and flume method. Transco intends to withdraw 10-11 million gallons of water for hydrostatic testing and has applied⁸ to the Susquehanna River Basin Authority (SRBC) to withdraw 2,880 million gallons per day of water. The SRBC permit application has not yet been subject to a public hearing or been approved, though it is very much a part of the pipeline process and should be considered a part of the DEIS.

According to the SRBC application, the hydrostatic test site is within 10 feet of a "test unit" that contained two prehistoric and a single historic specimen, which were sent to the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission (PHMC) in November 2015; PHMC response was still pending at the time of the SRBC application, making it difficult to know whether or not this proposed crossing and water withdrawal is feasible. (It should also be noted that Transco originally misidentified the property owner where the water withdrawal is proposed, causing undue stress for the family and creating doubt on Transco's credibility to present accurate information.)

In addition, the former bed of a feeder branch of the Union Canal,⁹ a National Historic Landmark,¹⁰ is located along the Swatara Creek at the proposed crossing and water withdrawal site. This 22-mile-long branch of the canal extended to the canal's northern terminus at Pine Grove. The Pine Grove feeder branch provided both water for the historic canal system and served as an important means of transporting coal from Schuylkill County's anthracite fields. The proposed open trench crossing of the Swatara Creek will cut through this piece of Pennsylvania and nationally recognized history, leaving behind only a barren pipeline right of way.

The PNDI response included in the SRBC water withdrawal application indicates that the area is subject to bog turtle habitat screening requirements. The US Fish and Wildlife Service's response to the PNDI Environmental Review Receipt lists an avoidance measure stating that the proposed activity should not be conducted within 50 feet of any streams, river, creeks, etc., unless the planned activity has been coordinated with the agency. There is no evidence of this coordination within the SRBC application or in the DEIS, only a letter to US Fish and Wildlife Service stating the following under the Species Impacts Assessments:

Swatara Creek Site (Lebanon County) - As discussed above, no wetlands are located within 300 feet of the site. Therefore, Transco does not anticipated any impacts to bog turtles at this site associated with the water withdrawal activities. ***However, due to the nature of the water withdrawal activity, Transco cannot observe the recommend[ed] avoidance measure to conduct the activity at least 50 feet from streams and rivers*** (Emphasis added by LPA.)¹¹

This completely negates the avoidance measure as directed; Transco cannot be allowed to circumvent this order simply because their proposed activity does not fit the directive.

Former Governor Ed Rendell, who presided over the Pennsylvania's fracking boom, just days ago admitted the state's fracking regulations favored economics over environmental safety.¹² This is not revelatory news, but it further substantiates the gas industry's sanctioned domain over our Commonwealth. DEP must deny this permit and restore the integrity of its mission, "...to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment."

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors

Ann Pinca

Ellie Salahub (Elise Kucirka Salahub)

Lebanon Pipeline Awareness

lebanonpipelineawareness@gmail.com

¹ <http://www.businesswire.com/news/-Williams> Partners Executes Agreements to Serve Two Gulf Coast LNG Export Facilities

² <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/-Cabot> Oil & Gas Corporation

³ <http://quittapahillwatershedassociation.org/projects.html>

⁴ <http://conewagocreek.org/>

⁵ <http://www.conewagoinitiative.net/>

⁶ <http://dodro.id/RxAuaSu>

⁷ <http://www.lebanonauthority.org/who.php>

⁸ <https://services.srbc.net/SWApp/public> info/loadapplication.aspx?key=7bee9f53-b5cd-444c-9da7-5d1332db2647

⁹ <http://www.livingplaces.com/pa/Schuylkill County/Pine Grove Borough.html>

¹⁰ <http://lebanoncountyhistoricalsociety.org/canal-tunnel/union-canal-tunnel-park>

¹¹ <http://docdro.id/9DqHwIE,pg.25>

¹² <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2016/07/29/3803309/former-governor->