

Testimony of Thomas J. Shepstone
Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline Project DEP Hearing
Bloomsburg, PA - June 13, 2017

I am a consulting planner with over 40 years of experience consulting with businesses and communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania. I also publish a blog supporting natural gas because I see what it's done economically for our region and nation.

The Atlantic Sunrise permit applications under Chapters 102 and 105 should be approved by DEP for a very simple reason and it is that any DEP decision with respect to Chapters 102 and 105 should simply be a matter of technical compliance.

Both chapters consist of very specific objective criteria and standards which shouldn't be influenced by public opinion as to anything but compliance with those criteria and standards.

Significantly in this regard, both chapters provide only that "the Department **may**, at its discretion, hold a public hearing." Hearings aren't mandatory because the subject is technical, not political. The regulations, moreover, do not provide for multiple hearings but, rather, "a" hearing on each application.

This strongly suggests what is going on in this case is little more than DEP providing a public ranting opportunity for those who wish to attack the applications.

After all, as a supporter of the project there is very little for me to say other than to point out the Atlantic Sunrise project has been extensively reviewed by both FERC and DEP, and that the applications meet the Chapter 102 and 105 requirements.

Project opponents, though, will be here tonight and at three more completely unnecessary hearings to attack the project on everything imaginable having nothing whatsoever to do with Chapter 102 and 105 criteria. They will talk about their opposition to fossil fuels, their hatred for the oil and gas industry and their ideology, but very little about Chapter 102

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having to do with erosion and sedimentation control or Chapter 105 having to do with dam safety and waterways management.

I urge DEP to simply follow its own rules. If it does so, there is no basis for anything but an approval of the Atlantic Sunrise project. The voluminous materials submitted to both FERC and DEP document compliance to the nth degree. I further urge DEP to stop enabling pipeline project opponents by conducting redundant public hearings that serve no purpose other than to allow those opponents to vent with a view toward getting media coverage of their antics. The regulations are straight-forward. Just enforce them and stop playing fractivist games.