

January 28, 2018

By Email

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Re: Sunoco’s Response to DEP’s request for information on PA-CU-0203.0000-WX & PA-CU-0203.0000-WX-16

Dear Mr. Muzic,

On January 23, 2018 Sunoco submitted a letter to the Department in response to the Department’s requests for additional information regarding horizontal directional drilling (“HDD”) Sites PA-CU-0203.0000-WX & PA-CU-0203.0000-WX-16. Pursuant to the Corrected Stipulated Order entered on EHB Docket No. 2017-009-L on August 10, 2017 (“Order”), and on behalf of Clean Air Council, Mountain Watershed Association, Inc., and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (“Appellants”), we respectfully submit these comments in reply.

Appellants believe that revisions to the reevaluation report are an improvement, but the plans still lack critical information.

In its December 19, 2017 letter to Sunoco, the Department raised its concerns regarding groundwater flow back at the site and requested additional information and updated plans to ensure groundwater would be properly managed. Appellants support this request and believe the information requested by the Department is needed to protect the public and natural resources.

An effective plan for managing the groundwater disrupted at the site necessarily must be based on site-specific groundwater data. Here, Sunoco has indicated that no table water mapping was available. Nevertheless, despite not being able to rely on existing data, Sunoco has still not performed any groundwater modeling. Instead it is proposing to implement typical groundwater management practices that may not be appropriate and adequate for this site.

Understanding the amount of groundwater that may surface due to Sunoco's construction is important for determining the impacts of that disruption, both to the water table and connected water supplies, and to the surface. Sunoco plans to discharge filtered groundwater to the land surface at the edge of the temporary work space. Discharging a significant amount of water could result in erosion of the surface and sediment flowing into the streams and wetland at the site. The plans do not account for these impacts. The extent to which the production of groundwater at the site may result in impacts to water supplies and the recharge of the wetland is also unclear.

Furthermore, Note 4 for the typical "Filter Bag Detail Use in Hay Bale Discharge Structure [sic]" explains that the structure will be located "such that it drains to a well-vegetated area with slopes between 1% and 5% toward the receiving water body." Here, the proposed location of the straw bale HDD water dewatering structure is located on a slope with a change in elevation greater than two feet over its 25-foot width, which is thus at least an 8% slope. This location is too steep and will cause an excessive potential for erosion and sedimentation into the receiving UNT to Yellow Breeches Creek. The slope is gentler to the west or southwest, which would be preferable places to locate the structure.

Appellants urge the Department to require Sunoco to provide a scientific basis for its preferred groundwater control methods to ensure they are adequate for this site. Sunoco should also be required to fully analyze and address the impacts of drawing down the groundwater as well as the impacts of its plan for discharging water. Finally, the dewatering structure should be moved westward to decrease the likely erosion and sedimentation its discharge causes.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please keep us apprised of your next steps on this HDD Site.

Sincerely,

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