

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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IN RE: BIRDSBORO POWER, LLC, NATURAL GAS POWER  
GENERATION FACILITY

\* \* \* \* \*

BEFORE: JOHN REPETZ, Program Manager  
BOB CONRAD, Member  
SCOTT R. WILLIAMSON, Program Manager  
HEARING: Thursday, November 2, 2017  
6:30 p.m.  
LOCATION: Boone Library  
129 North Mill Street  
Birdsboro, PA 19508

Reporter: Jessica Ashman

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SPEAKERS: Craig Stevens, Karen Feridun, Dyanne Jurin, Heather Goodman Nelson, Jill Kauffman, Jennifer Hanf, Kate Kennedy, Carol Anne Donohoe, Walter Hug, Ed Braukus, Ryan Helms, Patti Rose, Sherrie Greene, Francis Laughney, Brian Walls, John Cole, David DeWalt

ALSO PRESENT:

JOHN BRAKEALL, Regional Coordinator  
Department of Environmental Justice

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NONE OFFERED

## P R O C E E D I N G S

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MR. REPETZ: Okay. Folks, we are now on the record. Good evening and welcome to the library here in Birdsboro for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's public hearing for the purpose related to the proposed Birdsboro Power, LLC, Natural Gas Power Generating Facility.

My name is John Repetz. I'm the Community Relations Coordinator for the DEP Southcentral region. We are located in Harrisburg.

I am joined this evening by Bob Conrad, who is the Assistant Regional Director for the Southeast - or Southcentral region. And Scott Williamson, who is the Waterways and Wetlands Program Manager for the Southcentral region.

And also joining us tonight is John Brakeall, from our Office of Environmental Justice. John is the one who will be handling the sign-ins tonight. He will also be our timekeeper this evening.

To get things started, I am going to ask Scott Williamson to come up and give a brief overview of the permits that are required for this

1 project, and the DEP's permitting process, and  
2 basically the reason for us to be in here.

3 Scott?

4 MR. WILLIAMSON: Thank you, John.

5 Again, my name is Scott Williamson. I  
6 am the Waterways and Wetlands Program Manager for  
7 the Pennsylvania DEP's Southcentral Regional Office.

8 Tonight the Pennsylvania DEP is  
9 collecting comments from the public on the Chapter  
10 105 Water Obstructions and Encroachment Permit  
11 Application, the Erosion and Sediment Control  
12 General Permit Application and the DTE Midstream  
13 application request for water quality certification.  
14 That are currently under technical review for the  
15 proposed Birdsboro Power Natural Gas Power  
16 Generation Facility, DTE Midstream Natural Gas  
17 Transmission, Birdsboro Pipeline, and a related  
18 water supply line proposed by Reading Area and Water  
19 Authority. The projects are located in Berks  
20 County, Pennsylvania.

21 Chapter 105 permits are required for  
22 the proposed activities located in, along, across or  
23 projecting into a water force, floodway or body of  
24 water, including wetlands. The Erosion and Sediment  
25 Control General Permit is needed for construction of

1 the DTE Natural Gas Transmission Pipeline.

2 Birdsboro Power, LLC has submitted a  
3 Chapter 105 application, Permit Number B06716, to  
4 DEP for activities associated with construction of  
5 the proposed Birdsboro Power Plant, including  
6 aboveground electric transmission lines.

7 Notice of the Chapter 105 Permit  
8 Application was published by DEP on Saturday,  
9 une 3rd, 2017, in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

10 DTE submitted a Chapter 105 Permit  
11 Application, Permit Number E06717, and Erosion and  
12 Sediment Control General Permit Number  
13 ESG0001117001, for activities associated with  
14 construction of their proposed Birdsboro Pipeline to  
15 supply natural gas to the Birdsboro Power Plant  
16 site.

17 Birdsboro Pipeline is also a federal  
18 entity, regulatory commission regulated project,  
19 Docket CP17-409.

20 DTE submitted a request for water  
21 quality certification to Pennsylvania DEP for the  
22 Birdsboro Pipeline project, DEP File Number Water  
23 Quality 03-003, as required by Section 401 of the  
24 Federal Clean Water Act, and as part of the Berks  
25 regulatory filing process.

1                   Notice of the Chapter 105 Permit  
2 Application was published by Pennsylvania DEP on  
3 Saturday, June 3rd, 2017, in the Pennsylvania  
4 Bulletin. Notice of the Water Quality Certification  
5 Request was published by Pennsylvania DEP on  
6 Saturday, August 12th, 2017, in the Pennsylvania  
7 Bulletin.

8                   Reading Area Water Authority submitted  
9 Chapter 105 Permit Applications, Permit Numbers  
10 E06-7018 and GP050616, Numbers 202 through 207, for  
11 activities associated with construction of their  
12 proposed water supply pipeline to the Birdsboro  
13 Power Plant site. Notice of the Chapter 105 Permit  
14 Application was published by DEP on Saturday,  
15 July 1st, 2017, in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

16                   Notice of this public hearing was  
17 published by DEP in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on  
18 Saturday, October 21st, 2017, and through the DEP  
19 press release on October 18th, 2017. Pennsylvania  
20 DEP will accept group comments on the Chapter 105,  
21 Water Obstructions and Encroachment Permit  
22 Applications and the DTE Water Quality Certification  
23 Request through Monday, November the 6th, 2017.

24                   PA DEP will also accept written  
25 comments on the DTE Erosion and Sediment Control

1 General Permit Application published in the  
2 Pennsylvania Bulletin on August 21st, 2017, through  
3 close of business on November 20th, 2017.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Scott.

6 During the hearing this evening, each  
7 speaker who is preregistered will be given five  
8 minutes to submit verbal testimony. Relinquishing  
9 of time to others is not permitted.

10 We ask everybody to please be very  
11 cognizant and please observe that five minute time  
12 frame. Presenters are asked to keep all comments  
13 relevant and on topic.

14 We ask those of you in attendance to  
15 please be courteous of others as they are speaking.  
16 Please keep your signs down as to not become a  
17 distraction.

18 We've allowed two hours for this  
19 public hearing. Time permitting, after we've gone  
20 through our list of preregistered speakers, we have  
21 14 of those this evening, those who did not  
22 preregister, if so desiring, will have an  
23 opportunity to come up and also give up to five  
24 minutes of testimony, as, I said, time permitting.

25 As Scott mentioned, we are accepting

1 written comments in addition to the verbal testimony  
2 being offered here this evening. Just a reminder,  
3 written comments and oral testimony this evening  
4 bear the same weight. One does not outweigh the  
5 other. Both anything said here tonight and  
6 submitted in writing will all become part of the  
7 official public record for this event.

8                   Comments may be e-mailed to RA,  
9 hyphen, DEPWW, hyphen, SCRO at pa.gov. Or mailed to  
10 the Department of Environmental Protection South  
11 Central Regional Office, Office of Waterways and  
12 Wetlands Program, 909 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg,  
13 PA, 17110. If you need extra information, please  
14 see me afterwards and I'll make sure you get that.

15                   Finally two other things. John did  
16 see - did get a number of you to sign in this  
17 evening. If you have not already done so, we'd ask  
18 that you please sign the sign-in sheet before you  
19 leave tonight.

20                   And also the last thing. If during  
21 the course of the two hours, if you need a restroom,  
22 through these doors here, to the right. And both  
23 restrooms are down the hall.

24                   So with that, we will get started.  
25 The speakers are called in the order in which I

1 received their registration. So leading off tonight  
2 is Craig Stevens.

3 MR. STEVENS: Good evening. My name  
4 is Craig Stevens. I am a second generation  
5 landowner in Silver Lake Township, Pennsylvania,  
6 Susquehanna County. I am here this evening on two  
7 issues.

8 One is the installation of piping. I  
9 don't know if anybody else here in the room has any  
10 pipe installed on their property before, but I have.

11 That's my pristine high value trout  
12 stream that was blown out on July 29th, 2011. They  
13 called it an IRT - IRTS, but the workers called it a  
14 blowout.

15 That was a crystal clear trout stream  
16 until they blew the bottom of it out. Three days  
17 later the DEP let them start up again. They turned  
18 it into a 20 foot diameter hole. You'll see the  
19 sandbags there.

20 Three days after that they turned it  
21 into a 30 foot diameter hole. It stayed that way  
22 and went on for two-and-a-half months.

23 I would say that was some problems  
24 with water to the Commonwealth there. What I  
25 couldn't get, it could be called a Franken-creek

1 when it got to that point. There was actually sewer  
2 pipe tubing going in. That was a 16-inch diameter  
3 pipeline that was going a half mile across my  
4 property and back in.

5 Here's my 115 acre rectangular  
6 property that I also have. It's also a  
7 sixth-generation property.

8 So Forestry was up there and pumped in  
9 - driving 5,000-gallon trucks, 20 of them. And they  
10 built a cool little straining bunker here. And they  
11 dumped a hundred thousand gallons of liquid of  
12 unknown origin all over my property. Totally off  
13 the road and off the site and off the area of  
14 installation. Illegally, by the way.

15 They left MaxGel all over the ground.  
16 That's not supposed to be anywhere. If you're in  
17 the DEP you know that MaxGel, once it's filled up  
18 with whatever it's filled up with is not supposed be  
19 left on the ground. They left millions of those all  
20 over my property.

21 Let's talk about compressor stations  
22 and power plants. There's the invisible things that  
23 come out of those. We have 50 power - 50 compressor  
24 stations in Susquehanna County, in one county. When  
25 we asked the industry what they're emitting, because

1 you can see visible emissions, they said it was  
2 water vapor. Really?

3                   So we had ten universities come in, in  
4 the last few years from all over the world and test  
5 what's really coming out. Would you like to know?  
6 It's benzene, toluene, xylene, and formaldehyde at  
7 such high levels that we were warned that the longer  
8 you live here, the more you're going to get embalmed  
9 by what's being blown out into the air.

10                   So concerns are here. Pipelines, a  
11 really innocuous little tube you put into the  
12 ground, until it will blow up, like in Westmoreland  
13 County, where without any - anything hitting it,  
14 anybody drilling into it, blew up.

15                   Now, am I the only one here that's  
16 figured this out? But that's the other end of the  
17 pipe, folks. That's my neighbor's water in Dimock,  
18 Pennsylvania. Only about 20 of them there have  
19 their water wells looking like that now for nine  
20 years.

21                   Why am I bringing that up? Because  
22 that's what's on the other end of the pipe.

23                   There has to be an extraction colony  
24 to send this gas somewhere. We happen to be one of  
25 the main extraction colonies on this planet right

1 now. We're not interested in being poisoned so that  
2 someone else in another big city or country, by the  
3 way -. Anybody here that thinks this is America's  
4 fuel, the line of every one of these pipes leads to  
5 a port now. Most of them are all leading to ports.

6 But then you get the federal  
7 government coming in like they're doing. FERC comes  
8 in. And they issue permits and come in and force  
9 these properties - along our properties. And then  
10 the U.S. Marshals show up with M16s and 30-round  
11 magazines and tell you that you need to get out of  
12 the way while a private corporation, to provide gas  
13 to a foreign country like Japan and India - which is  
14 where the gas is going -.

15 Where we live, yeah, M16s, 30-round  
16 magazines, and zip ties -. Not interested. As a  
17 Constitution conservative right-wing guy, you don't  
18 show up at my 185-year-old property and tell me to  
19 get lost because they drew a line across it,  
20 somebody did.

21 I had them paint American flags on the  
22 trees out here, our good American workers and they  
23 cut them right down.

24 They don't care. And this is what it  
25 looks like today. That's the Constitution Pipeline.

1 Those trees are still laying there rotting and they  
2 were cut down a year and a half ago.

3 Do you know why they didn't move  
4 forward? Because New York State, when I went and  
5 showed the Attorney General these pictures, he  
6 wasn't interested in participating in the part where  
7 they show up with machine guns.

8 So they said no to the hundred miles  
9 of it, because of how badly they treated the  
10 citizens on the 25-mile Pennsylvania side.

11 So an end to this. We're not  
12 interested - I'm not interested in having my water  
13 poisoned and my air contaminated so somebody else  
14 can get power. That is not how America works. That  
15 is not what the Constitution says. That's not what  
16 the PA Constitution says.

17 I have a right to clean air and pure  
18 water. It's stated right in Article 1, subsection  
19 27. Anybody can read it. Our focus is, follow the  
20 Constitution.

21 Don't follow the money folks. There's  
22 \$100,000,000 of fake money. It's as fake as any  
23 promise anybody in this room that proposes -. These  
24 pipeline or the power station, it's as fake as what  
25 they're offering. And we're not interested anymore.

1           So let's stop poisoning my neighbors  
2 and let's start doing this right. And if you're  
3 going to build anything, I'm sure there's great  
4 builders in here, people that work for companies.  
5 But when it goes wrong, somebody had better clean it  
6 up.

7           And by the way, nobody ever cleaned up  
8 my property. Thank you very much.

9           MR. REPETZ: Karen Feridun.

10          MS. FERIDUN: Thank you.

11          We have one toe over the climate  
12 precipice and only a handful of years to pull  
13 ourselves back. The need to stop using carbon-based  
14 fuels has never been clearer or more urgent.

15          Since 2014 the DEP has approved more  
16 than 48 new natural gas power plants. The Governor  
17 and legislature have actively promoted shale gas  
18 development in more ways than I have had to list.

19          And when it was clear that the new  
20 president was going to attempt to pull the United  
21 States out of the Paris Climate Agreement, many  
22 Governors vowed to uphold the terms of the  
23 agreement. Our Governor was not among them.

24          I have participated in many comment  
25 periods over the past two years and I have observed

1 several problems with them. They're always poorly  
2 advertised. The public is ill-informed about the  
3 projects under review. And trying to become better  
4 informed can lead one down a rabbit hole of  
5 conflicting and missing reports and incomplete  
6 answers.

7                   For instance, one of my concerns with  
8 this project is the asbestos on the former Arbogast  
9 site.

10                   In 2006, 2009 and 2011 media reports -  
11 reported asbestos on the site, usually in the  
12 context of cleanup underway or that it was  
13 completed.

14                   Still in June of 2016 the Berks County  
15 Planning Commission referred to areas of concern  
16 that included asbestos-containing materials. But in  
17 December of 2016 WFMC reported that the demolition  
18 of the stacks on the site was being held up.

19                   According to the DEP's Notice of  
20 Violation, no Asbestos Abatement and  
21 Demolition/Renovation Notification Form had been  
22 filed. The company was going to have to postpone  
23 the demolition. Until the contractor in charge of  
24 bringing the stacks down told the DEP that two of  
25 the stacks had already been loaded with explosives

1 and some stacks came down the next day.

2                   In response to the Notice of  
3 Violation, the company said it did not file the  
4 required form because it did not believe the  
5 regulation applied to stacks, due to the fact that  
6 stacks alone did not constitute a facility. And  
7 that they were proven to not contain asbestos-  
8 containing materials, according to testing results  
9 they claimed to have.

10                   But that doesn't square with the  
11 concerns raised by the Berks County Planning  
12 Commission in June. And where are those results?  
13 What's an interested public person supposed to do  
14 with that?

15                   In the end, members of the public,  
16 undeterred, researched everything from samples to  
17 box turtles to arsenic in the soil to provide  
18 informed comments. Yet there hasn't been a single  
19 time where you or any other regulator has acted on  
20 our wishes.

21                   This time is different, the recent  
22 experiences of the more than 100 drillings on the  
23 Mariner East II Pipeline show that we the people  
24 were correct in asking you to reject the very  
25 permits under consideration for the DEP pipeline

1 now.

2                   And that's just one of the many  
3 examples that demonstrate our concerns are  
4 well-founded. By this time -.

5                   But this time things are different for  
6 another reason, the one I opened with. We can point  
7 to a body of evidence, the proofs that we need to  
8 transition away from carbon-based fuels right away.  
9 We are not trying to find and follow a paper trail  
10 full of dead ends.

11                   The science is on our side, publically  
12 available and abundant. And let's not forget that  
13 any project that exacerbates climate change, as both  
14 power plants and pipelines do, impact water. You  
15 have an authority over pipeline projects. However,  
16 you all have the justification that you need to deny  
17 the certification for the pipeline on the impacts of  
18 horizontal directional drilling alone.

19                   But these projects collectively will  
20 impact water in many other ways and you know it.  
21 Your jobs have never been more important.

22                   You are not in the business of  
23 managing pollution. You are in the business of  
24 protecting the environmental. Use the authority you  
25 have to deny the authorizations being sought for

1 these projects and help save the planet in the  
2 process. Thank you.

3 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Karen. Dyanne  
4 Jurin.

5 MS. JURIN: So one person often  
6 wonders what power do they have? What can they do?  
7 They go to so many meetings and they speak science  
8 and the truth and things still don't seem to go your  
9 way.

10 But one thing I know is that we all  
11 still have to continue to speak our integrity,  
12 whether we think we can affect change or not. To  
13 live and speak our integrity is what we need to do.

14 And we, all of us, we are the  
15 community. We are the Department of Environmental  
16 Protection. We are the builders of gas pipelines  
17 and gas power plants. We are those who love the  
18 Schuylkill Valley River, and we are those that love  
19 the Monocacy Creek, the woods and native plants  
20 along the streams and riverbanks.

21 We are children, we are adults, we are  
22 seniors. We are all affected by water and air  
23 quality. We are those that may develop strokes,  
24 heart disease, asthma and other respiratory  
25 illnesses with poor air and water quality.

1                   We are those that develop regulations  
2 to protect our air and water. We are those who  
3 promise to do no harm to the water and air quality  
4 when we build, transport gas and produce electric -  
5 electricity.

6                   But we are also those that are tired  
7 of seeing drilling loads spilled into the valley  
8 wetlands, rivers and streams, when a pipeline - when  
9 a pipeline is constructed through areas like these.  
10 We are those that know that inadequate erosion and  
11 sedimentation controls are used.

12                   Though we have otherwise promised on  
13 paper, we are collectively responsible for our  
14 planet. We are those that see the exponential rate  
15 of climate change and global warming. We are those  
16 that are informed by science and experience that we  
17 need to turn away from fossil fuels now.

18                   This is the line in the sand. We need  
19 to come together, all together and stop the use of  
20 fossil fuels.

21                   For all of us this should be the  
22 turning point. We are who are knowledgeable in  
23 energy production should use our knowledge to  
24 continue to conserve energy and create energy with  
25 zero-carbon emissions.

1           We have the knowledge. We can do this  
2 together. We, in our communities, should turn our  
3 know-how to creating safe, healthy communities.

4           This development, these homes, are  
5 going to be closer to a power plant than ever  
6 before. We need to protect each other. We need to  
7 speak out for each other.

8           Together we need to turn away from  
9 this gas pipeline, this gas pipeline and this power  
10 plant. To use our knowledge and community power to  
11 protect our water and air quality and move to  
12 noncarbon and nonmethane fuels and power plants.

13           We need to continue to speak our  
14 integrity. Thank you very much. And thank you for  
15 having an actual public meeting, which DTE and FERC  
16 have not had about this particular project. It has  
17 never been public. So thank you so much, I  
18 appreciate it.

19           MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Dyanne.  
20 Heather Goodman Nelson.

21           MS. NELSON: Thank you. Good evening.  
22 As a homeowner in Kennedy Township and a person who  
23 is lucky enough to live along the Manatawny Creek,  
24 and as a trout fisherman and as a person who eats  
25 from the creek -. I'm extremely concerned that

1 DTE's proposed Birdsboro Pipeline will cross 17  
2 waterways, including the Schuylkill River.

3                   It will cross the Little Manatawny  
4 Creek, which is classified as an exceptional-value  
5 stream and cannot be degraded. All wetlands in and  
6 along the floodplain of the Little Manatawny and its  
7 tributaries are also classified as exceptional value  
8 and cannot be degraded.

9                   In addition, Hay Creek, from its  
10 headwaters to the Schuylkill, is also designated as  
11 a wild trout water. Therefore, all wetlands in the  
12 floodplain of the Hay Creek are also exceptional  
13 value and cannot be degraded.

14                   The proposed pipeline will result in  
15 extensive and permanent alternation of wetlands,  
16 including exceptional value wetlands along the  
17 Little Manatawny and Hay Creek. The practice of  
18 discriminate clearing of vegetation used for the  
19 construction of pipelines results in permanent  
20 alterations in wetland habitat.

21                   I'm concerned about the destruction of  
22 riparian buffers along waterways and short and  
23 long-term effects this will have along the creeks  
24 and river. Riparian buffers affect water quality,  
25 water quantity and stream ecosystem health. A

1 reduction in healthy and mature streamside  
2 vegetation reduces stream shading, which increases  
3 stream temperature and reduces its suitability for  
4 reproduction and sustainability for invertebrates,  
5 fish, reptiles and mammals.

6                   Loss of riparian buffers also  
7 negatively impact the benthic macroinvertebrate  
8 population. And as diverse populations disappear,  
9 studies have shown decreased nutrients in algae and  
10 reduction of water quality.

11                   Warmer water means less fish.  
12 Especially Pennsylvania's native brown trout, which  
13 needs cooler waters to survive. Obviously any  
14 disturbance to one species affects all species in  
15 the ecosystem.

16                   In the proposed pipeline area we are  
17 fortunate to have Bald Eagles, Kingfishers and many  
18 more that feed on insects and fish.

19                   The loss of vegetation also makes the  
20 stream more susceptible to erosion events, which  
21 exacerbates sedimentation and impacts of  
22 construction.

23                   I'm also concerned about sediment  
24 pollution, as a result of the construction of the  
25 pipeline, which can affect the whole ecosystem,

1 including benthic macroinvertebrates and fish. And  
2 it affects the reduction in suitability of habitat  
3 for reproduction.

4 I'm concerned that the pipeline will  
5 cross the Schuylkill River. And that where it will  
6 do so is designated as a wild untainted river  
7 system.

8 I am troubled that the pipeline will  
9 cross a short distance upstream from the drinking  
10 water intake for the Borough of Pottstown. Given  
11 problems that have resulted during construction of  
12 other pipelines, such as Mariner East II, there is  
13 good reason to be concerned.

14 Some of my other concerns are habitat  
15 fragmentation, soil compaction, destruction of  
16 wildlife habitat not related to waterways, diversion  
17 of groundwater. And not to mention the possibility  
18 of the worst-case scenario, which has happened many  
19 times in the past, pipeline spills.

20 But as articulated in Article 1,  
21 Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, the  
22 Environmental Rights Amendment, the people of  
23 Pennsylvania have a right to clean air, pure water  
24 and to the preservation of the natural scenic,  
25 historic and aesthetic values of the environment.

1                   As you know, PA DEP's mission  
2 statement is to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and  
3 water from pollution, and to provide for the health  
4 and safety of its systems through a cleaner  
5 environment. The mission statement also says we  
6 will work with departments, with individuals,  
7 organizations, governments and businesses to prevent  
8 pollution and restore our natural resources.

9                   These obligations demand that PA DEP  
10 demand the water quality certification for the  
11 proposed DTE Birdsboro Pipeline. Thank you for  
12 having me tonight.

13                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Heather. Jill  
14 Kauffman.

15                   MS. KAUFFMAN: The Delaware  
16 Riverkeeper Network, DRN, opposes the construction  
17 of the proposed Birdsboro Power Plant and all of its  
18 pertinent structures. DRN is a private nonprofit  
19 environmental organization with nearly 20,000  
20 members throughout the Delaware River Watershed,  
21 including Amity, Oley, Robinson, Rockland and Union  
22 Townships and the Borough of Birdsboro.

23                   The following statements supplement  
24 its comments DRN has submitted previously on these  
25 pending permits. We appreciate that the Department

1 of Environmental Protection, DEP, is holding this  
2 hearing today. DRN believes that it is important  
3 for the people and communities that will be affected  
4 by the proposed power plant, waterline, transmission  
5 line and natural gas pipeline to be informed, and to  
6 be given opportunity to comment and to have those  
7 comments fully considered in pertinent decision-  
8 making.

9                   However, opportunities for those who  
10 will be affected to get that information about the  
11 full bounds of these projects have been few and far  
12 between in the two-and-a-half years since this bad  
13 idea was first proposed.

14                   Tonight PA DEP is allowing just 120  
15 minutes for comment on five separate pending  
16 permits. The short time frame significantly limits  
17 the number of speakers. Each speaker has five  
18 minutes or less, making it difficult for any speaker  
19 to comprehensively address the full range of impact  
20 from these proposed projects.

21                   The pending permits on which DEP is  
22 focusing today represent hundreds, if not thousands,  
23 of pages of complex documents that few who will be  
24 affected have had the opportunity to review.

25                   Among the impacts on which DTE is

1 seeking comment tonight is the proposed 230 kilovolt  
2 transmission lines proposed to run for four miles  
3 along the banks of the Schuylkill River.

4                   This new transmission line will have a  
5 100 foot wide right of way, along which 29 monopoles  
6 will tower 110 to 140 feet in the air, degrading the  
7 recreational experience of users of Pennsylvania's  
8 first Scenic River, the 40th anniversary of which  
9 will be marked in 2018.

10                   Without asking for public comment, PA  
11 DEP has already given approval for this transmission  
12 line to cross the Schuylkill River twice, first in  
13 Birdsboro and then again in Robeson Township. For  
14 this approval DEP receives total fees of \$1,500 a  
15 year.

16                   Is the community then informed that  
17 DEP has permitted this power plant to emit up to  
18 485,000 pounds or 242.5 tons of carbon dioxide per  
19 hour on a 12 month annual average basis? The  
20 average ton - that's about six tons of carbon  
21 dioxide over a full year of use.

22                   Half of this carbon dioxide will  
23 remain in the atmosphere. Thirty-five (35) percent  
24 of it will be taken out by our oceans, increasing  
25 ocean acidification.

1                   Do people living near the old Arbogast  
2 site know that contractors for the power plant  
3 brought down the old smokestacks without ruling out  
4 asbestos was in the smokestack bricks or mortar?  
5 Even though the DEP's air quality program had not  
6 confirmed the absence of asbestos, DEP's district  
7 mining office ordered contractors to demolish the  
8 stacks when they learned that the stacks had been  
9 undermined and explosives placed.

10                   Despite the Army Corps' 2006 to 2008  
11 site remediation, the 2009 environmental site  
12 assessment noted that asbestos-containing materials  
13 remained on the site. This PSA referenced earlier  
14 documents that described furnace bricks and other  
15 bricks as potentially containing asbestos. No  
16 document ruling out the presence of zinc or asbestos  
17 in the stacks was provided to DRN. And we conducted  
18 a remedial examination of the Arbogast site.

19                   Do local residents know that the soil  
20 on the Arbogast site remains so contaminated that  
21 DTE is proposing to remove all soils from the  
22 pipeline right away on the site to ensure that  
23 future maintenance activities can occur without  
24 having to monitor and manage contaminated soil?

25                   This approach ignores the potential

1 for reducement of contaminants from adjacent soils  
2 and instead getting replacement fill. DTE has  
3 characterized only the level of contamination of  
4 soils in the right of way, ignoring nearby soils.  
5 DRN has been unable to determine if DEP has  
6 requested a full analysis of the Arbogast site soil  
7 contamination.

8 DEP must give full consideration to  
9 the public comment process, not the short trip  
10 represented by this hearing. Furthermore, the  
11 September 19, 2013, Supreme Court Decision in  
12 Robeson Township Delaware Riverkeeper Network,  
13 et al., versus Commonwealth, obligates the DEP and  
14 local governments to honor the social contract  
15 embodied in Article 1, Section 27 of the  
16 Pennsylvania Constitution that promises clean air,  
17 pure water, preservation of natural, scenic,  
18 historic and aesthetic values of the environment,  
19 and that commits to protect public natural resources  
20 for present and future generations.

21 These proposed infrastructure projects  
22 will deprive communities of their natural resources  
23 now and for generations to come. And therefore,  
24 they should be denied.

25 Thank you for the opportunity to make

1 these comments tonight.

2 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Jill.

3 Jennifer Hanf.

4 MS. HANF: Thank you for allowing me  
5 to speak.

6 I am a Berks County resident, who  
7 hence was born and lived here all my life. Like all  
8 of us I care very much about its well-being.

9 Why is a 13.2 mile long pipeline a  
10 point of concern? The disturbing reality of this  
11 project is that individual impact studies have been  
12 saying that.

13 What does sedimentation mean? A  
14 sediment study looks at impacts of each aspect of  
15 the project separately, isolating each operation and  
16 its effect, rather than studying the cumulative  
17 effect of the project.

18 Environmental impacts are cumulative.  
19 Loss of vegetation means increases to risk of  
20 erosion. A little bit might not increase one risk.  
21 But when combined with other environmental  
22 degradation, more erosion, groundwater disturbance,  
23 loss of habitat, loss of forestation, sedimentation,  
24 loss of riparian buffers, it is part of a  
25 significant whole.

1 Cumulative effects will impact the  
2 community of Birdsboro and the county and the state.

3 Is there another way to look at this?  
4 As a former business owner, I use business balance  
5 sheets and profit and loss statements often. And  
6 they helped my businesses and they guided decision-  
7 making. With them we can see what is at stake, even  
8 without connotative data.

9 So the DTE pipeline Birdsboro plan  
10 profit and loss statement, short term. Jobs, plus  
11 tax revenue, income side. On the expense side, loss  
12 of permanent jobs, perhaps due to loss of farmland,  
13 plus loss of tax revenue. None of this we know for  
14 sure.

15 Now I want to look at a balance sheet,  
16 because a balance sheet is a different kind of  
17 document that shows assets and liabilities over  
18 time.

19 And so for the community impact  
20 balance sheet for Birdsboro and its surrounding  
21 area, community assets represent net worth or value.  
22 Over time assets are spent or invested. And  
23 liabilities and challenges, like poverty and health,  
24 they're already here, they already exist.

25 Will the community be at greater or

1 lesser risk in the future? And what can we do to  
2 mitigate it?

3 Environmental assets include  
4 stormwater management, high-value streams, native  
5 species, animals and plants, intact forested areas,  
6 air quality and riparian buffer.

7 Other assets in another category  
8 include public health and safety, health and  
9 longevity, healthy births, infrastructure, roads,  
10 bridges and libraries, a 100 year floodplain.

11 Economic benefits and assets include  
12 the business and property values that are stable.  
13 Recreation and recreation tourism, farmland, a  
14 medium income and tax revenue that is stable.

15 And also in this area very uniquely,  
16 historic benefits. Historic landmarks dating back  
17 since before the Revolutionary War; historic  
18 farmland and trusts.

19 Environmental assets that are spent  
20 are destroyed in the completion of this project and  
21 may not ever be reclaimed. Citizens have a bit more  
22 long-term control with public health and safety.  
23 Bridges and roads can be repaired after heavy  
24 construction use.

25 However, permanent loss of the

1 floodplains and clean air and water will have  
2 long-term health and safety consequences.

3                   Economically, the effect of the  
4 pipeline and Birdsboro Power Plant is unknown.  
5 Environmental degradation affects quality of life.  
6 Closely tied to the economic potential of this area  
7 are historic assets dating back, as I said, before  
8 the Revolution. Historic farms, farmland and other  
9 structures depend on the surrounding beauty and  
10 aesthetics for true historic context.

11                   In the 21st Century, preserved areas  
12 like these are increasingly scarce and threatened.  
13 They are much more valuable in the future if they  
14 are preserved intact.

15                   The future is a moral issue. How far  
16 are we able to look into the future? Five years,  
17 ten years, 50 years?

18                   In 1978 the Schuylkill River was the  
19 first river in Pennsylvania to be named a state  
20 scenic river. This designation extends to this  
21 section of the Schuylkill River.

22                   Can the same promise be made to the  
23 future as we made in 1978? I thank you for your  
24 kind consideration and for the opportunity to speak.

25                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Jennifer.

1 Kate Kennedy.

2 MS. KENNEDY: Hi, my name is Kate  
3 Kennedy. I'm a homeowner. I live right on the  
4 Schuylkill River for 11 years now. My property  
5 abuts the Schuylkill River.

6 It is a remarkable area and it is  
7 filled with an incredible diversity of wildlife,  
8 including native and migratory birds, ducks,  
9 herring, Bald Eagles, turtles, frogs, deer, beaver,  
10 mink, you name it.

11 The river and the surrounding wetlands  
12 are a vibrant ecosystem whose functionality depends  
13 upon a clean river. I am deeply concerned that the  
14 power plant project will have a detrimental impact  
15 on the health of the river and all the life that  
16 relies on it.

17 And I'll illuminate three of my main  
18 concerns. First, the construction of the project  
19 will require over 100 acres of growth disturbance  
20 and thousands of feet of stream disturbance. The  
21 Schuylkill River, Monocacy Creek, Little Manatawny  
22 Creek and several tributaries will be affected. The  
23 wetlands and forests in these areas will be  
24 permanently disrupted and disturbed to the detriment  
25 of animal and plant species.

1                   Wetland restoration is not the  
2 ecological equivalent to naturally occurring  
3 forested wetlands. You simply cannot rebuild it the  
4 way nature did in the first place.

5                   Second, the plant is to be built in  
6 the floodplain. Big Creek and Little Manatawny  
7 Creek are both classified as exceptional value and  
8 cannot be degraded. The Department of Environmental  
9 Resources' regulations provides protection against  
10 secondary polluting effects, should they become  
11 imminent. Impacts from climate change, severe  
12 weather event and storms will affect how water runs  
13 over or off the plant grounds into these exceptional  
14 value waterways.

15                   Third, riparian buffers will be  
16 irrevocably disturbed. The horizontal directional  
17 drilling will dredge up industrial matter. The  
18 power plant site has been an industrial site for  
19 over 250 years.

20                   Any erosion and sediment pollution  
21 could potentially impact fish, plant life and water  
22 quality downstream, while banks and erosion,  
23 especially along the pipeline vent, lead to the  
24 potential for invasive plant species' explosive  
25 growth.

1                   One of the goals of the Schuylkill  
2 Heritage Area is noted in our management plan,  
3 called Living with the River. Is to preserve and  
4 restore the Schuylkill River Valley's significant  
5 environmental resources, particularly those vital to  
6 the health of the river and its tributaries.

7                   Heritage Area and preservation  
8 organizations agree that heritage, cultural, natural  
9 and environmental and historic resources need to be  
10 considered before disturbance takes place. We  
11 should be cognizant of the long-term impacts on the  
12 water quality of the Delaware River basin, in  
13 particular the Schuylkill River watershed.

14                   Alterations of the water quality  
15 impact everything around it. Plants and animals are  
16 required for survival, people who live around it and  
17 use the water for drinking water or recreation. As  
18 well as those homeowners whose well water may be  
19 negatively impacted by ignoring safe, thorough and  
20 ethical best practices.

21                   We should all be good stewards of the  
22 water and land, and consciously take care of it,  
23 rather than ravage it for short-sighted gain and  
24 greed.

25                   Please deny these permits. Thank you.

1                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Kate.

2                   Carol Anne Donohoe.

3                   MS. DONOHOE: Thank you.

4                   I am a resident of Berks County. And  
5 I am commenting tonight to urge the Pennsylvania  
6 Department of Environmental Protection to fulfill  
7 its mandate to protect the environment of  
8 Pennsylvania by denying the water quality  
9 certification for the DTE pipeline and the Birdsboro  
10 Power Plant.

11                   I hold a Master's degree in Water  
12 Resource Management. My research focused on the  
13 importance of wetlands and riparian zones in  
14 impacting stream water quality that prevents  
15 erosion. This is a dynamic interaction between  
16 plants, soils and microbes in these zones. Any  
17 adverse disruption of this dynamic can result in the  
18 deterioration of the stream water quality.

19                   According to the Delaware River  
20 Waterkeeper (sic) Network - Birdsboro Pipeline's  
21 construction will result in the loss of riparian  
22 vegetation. These are the trees and other  
23 vegetation that serve as a natural barrier to  
24 pollutants entering the stream.

25                   This reduction in vegetation can

1 increase stream temperature. Increased temperatures  
2 have a negative impact on fish incubation, rearing,  
3 foraging and a safe habitat. This will eventually  
4 change the fish population from one made for colder  
5 temperatures to one adapted to warmer.

6           For example, this means an increase in  
7 the stream's temperature can convert the dominant  
8 fish population from trout to carp.

9           Benthic macroinvertebrate populations  
10 are also reduced by the loss of riparian vegetation.  
11 These are the organisms that dehydrify the water and  
12 help the site produce nutrients and algae. Without  
13 these organisms, oxygen levels in the stream will  
14 decrease, essentially choking off all life.  
15 Reduction of water quality can impact water supplies  
16 and habitats downstream.

17           The loss of vegetation also makes the  
18 stream more susceptible to erosion events. When you  
19 remove the trees and other riparian vegetation, you  
20 remove the natural barrier along the stream bank to  
21 keep sediment from running off the floodplain into  
22 the stream.

23           This sediment gets deposited into the  
24 streambed, making the streambed less porous and  
25 causing more problems with flooding. Increased

1 deposition also fills in the streambed, making less  
2 room for water flow, and again increased flooding.

3           Due to the increasing impacts of  
4 climate change, we should be moving towards  
5 solutions of decrease, not increase of flooding  
6 impacts. As a few of the other commenters have  
7 mentioned, these pipelines will cross over  
8 environmentally exceptional-value streams and  
9 wetlands that by law cannot be degraded.

10           The building of this pipeline will  
11 lead to such. It will strain the wetlands, riparian  
12 and stream environments all to line the pockets of  
13 the oil and gas sector.

14           We are often told that natural gas is  
15 just a bridge fuel while we explore alternative  
16 energies. Construction of thousands of monopoles,  
17 pipeline, and other infrastructure to get this  
18 bridge fuel to market exposes that talking point for  
19 the lie that it is.

20           A bridge is a structure that gets us  
21 from here to there. A bridge does not consist of  
22 miles of pipeline and other infrastructure,  
23 permanently desecrating natural habitat, decreasing  
24 water and land quality, as well as property values  
25 and quality of life for nearby property owners.

1           Sadly, Pennsylvania has been in the  
2 fracking business long enough for us to have hard  
3 data as to the impacts of this form of extreme  
4 fossil fuel extractions. We've been told this  
5 practice can be done safely, but the facts prove  
6 otherwise.

7           There is nothing to be gained from  
8 building this pipeline or this power plant, unless  
9 you are a financial beneficiary. The gas will not  
10 be used in this area. It will be sold out to the  
11 highest bidder, while Pennsylvanians pay the costs  
12 of public health, safety and permanent environmental  
13 destruction.

14           Any assurance of the safety or serious  
15 environmental assessments are laughable. Please  
16 deny the water certification. Stop this pipeline  
17 and power plant. Thank you.

18           MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Carol.

19           Walter Hug.

20           MR. HUG: I'll just make a short  
21 statement.

22           Hello, and thanks for the opportunity  
23 to say a few words. First of all, I know there's  
24 been talk about water quality and water issues. But  
25 when I first heard about this plant and the location

1 where it is, there's a residential area close to it,  
2 it was shocking.

3           We also have the potential for  
4 additional pollution and not just water pollution,  
5 but the air, noise and light pollution in regard to  
6 this power plant. We rely on the Pennsylvania DEP  
7 more than ever to do its job and safeguard our  
8 environment due to the gross damage done by the  
9 Trump administration in weakening the EPA and  
10 removing certain protections, such as the Clean  
11 Water Act and other safeguards.

12           Our waterways, including wetlands,  
13 aquifers and private well water have never been more  
14 threatened from a number of sources, but especially  
15 fracking and pipelines. DTE's proposed Birdsboro  
16 Pipeline will be another potential negative impact  
17 to our local waters.

18           Rupturing, corroding and leaking  
19 pipelines are not a rare or unusual occurrence. In  
20 fact, they occur weekly around the country. And  
21 it's happened hundreds of times in the past year  
22 alone. The leakage of toxic drilling fluids also  
23 happens frequently.

24           And not far from here, the Mariner  
25 East II pipeline alone has had over 40 drilling

1 leaks or spills, with a total of approximately  
2 200,000 gallons released, according to the Clean Air  
3 Council and FracTracker.

4                   This pipeline will cross many waters,  
5 including a number of exceptional-value streams.  
6 And also it will threaten the Schuylkill River,  
7 where I live. And the Schuylkill River was  
8 designated as our first - our state's first scenic  
9 river. And it provides drinking water for  
10 communities downstream.

11                   It is clearly obvious that we must put  
12 the environment first. And in fact, our state's  
13 Constitution provides safeguards of our lands, air  
14 and water. And it has already been mentioned, our  
15 Constitution states that the people have a right to  
16 clean air, pure water and the preservation of  
17 natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of  
18 the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural  
19 resources are the common property of all the people,  
20 including generations yet to come.

21                   As trustees of these resources, the  
22 Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for  
23 the benefit of all people. DEP, please deny  
24 permits. Deny the permits for this project. Thank  
25 you.

1                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Walt.

2                   Ed Braukus.

3                   MR. BRAUKUS: Good evening.

4                   My name's Ed Braukus. The  
5 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,  
6 743, in Reading, here in Berks County.

7                   We're here tonight to ask for the  
8 water quality certification - approval of the permit  
9 and ESCGP 2 application -. Local 743 represents  
10 over 400 electrical construction workers, most of  
11 whom live in Berks County, many of them even in  
12 Birdsboro and surrounding townships.

13                   Pipelines and the project in question  
14 greatly affect both the home lives and work lives of  
15 these men and women. This project has already done  
16 great things for this community and the environment.

17                   As some people mentioned, the  
18 Brownfield site. It took that dangerous,  
19 dilapidated, toxic site and remediated it. They  
20 cleaned it up.

21                   New life is going to be injected in  
22 this town in the form of an industrial facility with  
23 family-sustaining jobs that most probably never  
24 thought we'd ever see here again. Those working on  
25 the Birdsboro Power project, from the owners to the

1 contractors to the craftsmen have been building this  
2 facility with safety and environment being number  
3 one priority.

4                   If these permits and applications are  
5 not approved, it's very possible this job will come  
6 to a screeching halt. Over a hundred construction  
7 workers will be out of work. That idea of new  
8 revenue for local tax bodies will disappear and this  
9 site will return to a rusty, dirty, unmaintained  
10 eyesore that nobody wants anything to do with.

11                   You're standing here tonight full of  
12 worry that there will be a huge negative impact to  
13 the environment from this project and these water  
14 crossings. I've seen how this owner and their  
15 contractors have operated. They want to be a good  
16 neighbor, because they plan on being here for a long  
17 time. After all, they're making a \$500,000,000  
18 investment in this town and this area.

19                   I also have faith in the regulations,  
20 requirements and oversight DEP has over these type  
21 of projects. I believe that any violations or  
22 events that put people's safety or the environment  
23 at risk should and will carrying with it the maximum  
24 penalty. That's why I am asking for all approvals  
25 from DEP to keep this project moving forward. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Ed.

3 Ryan Helms.

4 MR. HELMS: Good evening, everybody.

5 My name is Ryan Helms, Berks County  
6 resident here. I'm a business manager at the  
7 electricians' union here locally. And I'm also the  
8 president of the Building and Construction Trades  
9 Council in Berks County.

10 And I stand here in favor of approving  
11 all permits necessary to improve progress for the  
12 Birdsboro Power Plant and all the supporting  
13 infrastructure needed, such as the gas pipeline, the  
14 water lines and the electrical transmission lines.

15 Undoubtedly permitting and regulation  
16 play a key role in the structure and economic  
17 development of the project. Fortunately, we do have  
18 governmental regulations for these infrastructure  
19 projects, to make sure that they are done safely and  
20 efficiently, while minimalizing the environmental  
21 impacts many of us, including myself, are concerned  
22 with.

23 Our abundant natural gas resources  
24 have afforded Pennsylvania a tremendous  
25 developmental opportunity, providing economic

1 benefits, such as in this particular case the  
2 Birdsboro Power Generating Facility, along with many  
3 other highly efficient gas power plants in our  
4 state.

5           This new facility will utilize low  
6 cost clean burning natural gas energy with the  
7 latest technologies being used to be safer to the  
8 environment. This project and many like it creates  
9 great-paying jobs with corporate benefits for local  
10 workers and tax revenues to multiple communities in  
11 the state.

12           Hundreds of construction jobs alone  
13 are being created by this project. These jobs will  
14 employ many - will employ many local construction  
15 workers, like my union brothers and sisters in  
16 building trades, and many of which are in attendance  
17 here tonight.

18           As the president of building trades  
19 unions here in Berks County, I can assure everyone  
20 that our trades workers, many of which are from the  
21 local communities, bring the most highly-skilled  
22 workforce to bear on this project. A highly skilled  
23 union workforce that is committed to public safety,  
24 as we do also live and play here. We take pride in  
25 building our community safely.

1           Our local economy is in line to reap  
2 considerable benefit from this project, through  
3 increased work for local vendors, local contractors  
4 and other businesses. Not to mention the boost in  
5 local commerce and increased activity of local  
6 restaurants, housing and retail establishments  
7 locally.

8           By hiring local union construction  
9 workers. this project is being built utilizing the  
10 safest, most highly trained skilled workers. I can  
11 assure you that this project will be built safely  
12 with consideration given to the environment in our  
13 counties and this local community.

14           Birdsboro was once a busy little steel  
15 town many years ago. My grandfather, along with  
16 other family members, lived locally and worked at  
17 Birdsboro Steel Corporation and Arbogast. But all  
18 those facilities have long been shut down and that  
19 was left behind, especially where the power plant is  
20 being located now is an eyesore with pollutants left  
21 on and in the ground.

22           Now with the birth of this industrial  
23 project, that is changing. With all the old  
24 decimated building being demolished and millions of  
25 tons of contaminated soil being removed for

1 remediation, there's been significant benefits to  
2 the local environment and community.

3 In closing I would ask you to support  
4 the Birdsboro Power Plant project, pipeline and all  
5 the infrastructure and allow the permitting process  
6 to go through. Thank you.

7 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Ronnie.

8 Shane Topple.

9 MR. WILLIAMSON: What's the last name?

10 MR. REPETZ: Topple.

11 Moving on. Patti Rose.

12 MS. ROSE: Good evening, everybody.

13 Thank you for this opportunity to  
14 comment. I am very concerned about all of the DTE  
15 pipeline and the Birdsboro Power Plant.

16 Power plants and pipelines contribute  
17 to climate change. With only a few years left to  
18 mitigate the effects of climate change, building  
19 infrastructure that continues our reliance on dirty  
20 energy for decades to come is irresponsible and  
21 something environmental regulators should guard  
22 against.

23 If approved, the pipeline will run  
24 through some of the most beautiful rural areas of  
25 our county and under the Schuylkill River. The

1 transmission pipeline that would connect to the  
2 Texas Eastern Pipeline that crosses Pennsylvania -.  
3 In Westmoreland County, the Texas Eastern Pipeline  
4 exploded, nearly killing a man, destroying his home  
5 and damaging property all around the blast site.

6           The pipeline was operating at the same  
7 psi that is listed as the maximum psi for the DTE  
8 pipeline. What would a blast like that do if it  
9 occurred on the Schuylkill River or at the site of  
10 the power plant itself? How would a small time like  
11 Birdsboro fare if that were to happen? How would  
12 the homes as close as 200 feet from the pipeline  
13 fare?

14           The plan is to use horizontal  
15 directional drilling to lay some of the pipeline.  
16 That is the same technique that has caused more than  
17 100 spills of drilling mud on the Mariner East II  
18 Pipeline, that also affects Berks County. Some of  
19 those spills have caused private water wells to dry  
20 up or become so contaminated that the land owners  
21 can no longer use their water and have to be  
22 connected to public water supplies.

23           Your agency has received a lot of  
24 criticism for issuing the same - very same permits  
25 for that pipeline that weren't commenting on that

1 - we're commenting on tonight for the DTE pipeline.  
2 You have an opportunity to prevent the damage that  
3 pipelines cause during construction or after they're  
4 in operation by denying the water quality  
5 certification for the DTE Pipeline.

6           The power plant would pose risks to  
7 the water supply, too. It would take millions of  
8 gallons of water from Lake Ontelaunee each day.  
9 Even though RAWA insists that the lake can handle it  
10 and provide drinking water to much of the area, they  
11 are not taking into consideration what would happen  
12 in a drought or what would happen if the population  
13 it serves the drinking water grows.

14           The borough's sewage plant would  
15 handle all of those millions of gallons of water  
16 coming out of the plant. There are no assurances  
17 that the plant could handle that much water. Too  
18 many decisions related to this project are being  
19 made because of money or because politicians have  
20 decided they want this project to happen. Neither  
21 motivation is a very good one. You can't drink  
22 money.

23           We have seen, for more than a dozen  
24 years, what has happened in the communities where  
25 the fracking is taking place to produce all the gas

1 for power plants like this one. People have gone  
2 for years without clean water in some communities.

3           Your agency has done little to help  
4 those people or to hold the companies responsible to  
5 account. Fracking is a cancer that metastasizes by  
6 way of infrastructure build-out, including pipelines  
7 and power plants like the ones under consideration  
8 here.

9           You have an obligation to protect  
10 Pennsylvania's natural environment and human  
11 environment under Article I, Section 27 of our  
12 Pennsylvania Constitution. You have more than  
13 enough justification to deny the water quality  
14 certification.

15           What Pennsylvania needs is more solar,  
16 wind and renewable energy projects, and development  
17 of a smart grid to power our energy needs of the  
18 future, not more dangerous and polluting fracking,  
19 pipelines, compressor stations and gas-fired power -  
20 gas-fired power plants.

21           We need to be developing these  
22 renewable sources to create jobs and not  
23 perpetuating more fossil fuel development, which is  
24 adding to increased global warming at an accelerated  
25 rate.

1                   We should be rapidly developing  
2 aboveground power generation rather than continuing  
3 to bring up millions of years old decaying matter,  
4 burning it and destroying our planet. Please do the  
5 right thing and shut these projects down.

6                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Patty.

7                   Sherrie Greene.

8                   MS. GREENE: Hi, my name is Sherrie  
9 Greene. Thank you for the opportunity to make a  
10 comment. I'm going to be very brief.

11                   This proposed Birdsboro Power Plant  
12 has a number of issues that have been downplayed.

13                   First of all, it's being located in a  
14 floodplane near the banks of the Schuylkill River,  
15 the state's first designated scenic river. It's  
16 also being located in the middle of the town right  
17 on Main Street, within 50 to 60 feet of some homes.  
18 This has never been done before.

19                   The Borough of Birdsboro does not have  
20 enough water. So approximately 3,000,000 gallons a  
21 day will be piped in by the Reading Area Water  
22 Authority from Lake Ontelaunee. The power plant  
23 will draw on Birdsboro Municipal Authority only in  
24 an emergency. It has already been determined that  
25 this water supply is not adequate.

1                   This power plant is proposed to  
2 discharge a minimum of 350,000 gallons of wastewater  
3 per day to the Birdsboro wastewater treatment plant.  
4 Once again, it has not been proven that this  
5 wastewater treatment facility can handle this job  
6 load.

7                   This wastewater will then eventually  
8 end up in the river. And there are unknown  
9 consequences to water quality and water life.

10                   I don't know why we're not pursuing  
11 clean energy solutions like wind and solar rather  
12 than using fossil fuels, which have been guaranteed  
13 to damage our environment.

14                   I so hope that you will deny this  
15 permit. Thank you very much.

16                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Sherrie.

17                   That concludes our list of  
18 preregistered speakers.

19                   A number of you did sign up at the  
20 door on your way in. So next up would be Francis  
21 Loughney.

22                   MR. LOUGHNEY: How are you doing?

23                   I'd like to thank you for holding this  
24 public meeting. I'm going to turn a little bit,  
25 because it's really tough to hear in the back.

1 I'm speaking for the permits. I am a  
2 council rep for the carpenters. I represent some of  
3 the workers here, some of the guys that are at the  
4 plant. They're going to max out at about 80 to a  
5 hundred carpenters.

6 For about 20 years I worked in the  
7 power plants, so I had an opportunity to work with a  
8 lot of the guys that are here tonight.

9 This plant isn't a one-hit wonder.  
10 There's going to be annual maintenance here, there's  
11 going to be lots of work, lots of jobs. We're  
12 talking about real wages, middle-class wages with  
13 healthcare benefits and a pension. We're talking  
14 about a real tax base for a half-billion dollar  
15 power plant.

16 In the 20 years that I worked in the  
17 power plants, I worked in trash incinerators all the  
18 way up to nuclear power plants. This is a clean  
19 plant. Gas-burning plants are clean, as opposed to  
20 garbage or coal. There's a big difference with  
21 these plants.

22 I moved down here about 30 years ago.  
23 I left a community that didn't have development.  
24 And there was very little disruption. People didn't  
25 have problems with traffic or, you know,

1 development.

2                   This is the price you pay.  
3 Construction is disruption. The one thing about  
4 plants like this, the benefit is really going to  
5 outweigh the inconvenience.

6                   And for a lot of the guys here, I'd  
7 just like to say, we need these jobs. And we need  
8 this plant. Thank you.

9                   MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Francis.

10                   Brian Walls.

11                   MR. WALLS: I'm not supposed to  
12 address you. And I appreciate your giving me five  
13 minutes to talk to you.

14                   My name is Brian Walls. I'm a resident  
15 of Berks County. And I also happen to be working on  
16 the project. And I want to make sure that I'm clear  
17 on something. We are talking about permitting a  
18 pipeline to fuel a powerhouse.

19                   Correct? Can I ask you that question?

20                   MR. REPETZ: You can state the  
21 question. You'll get a response once the Department  
22 completes our review.

23                   MR. WALLS: Okay.

24                   Well, we aren't talking about a  
25 pipeline that is sending fuel to a port for export.

1 But we're talking about a pipeline that will feed  
2 the powerhouse.

3                   This is a powerhouse that, like you've  
4 heard, will employ hundreds of the finest craftsmen  
5 in the country, give them a job. And it will also  
6 create 30 - approximately 30 full-time jobs for the  
7 Berks County area. You've heard all that.

8                   Some of the things that we heard that  
9 I want to make sure that we're clear about is -. I  
10 don't know, I'm on this project. I've seen the  
11 majority of the project. I know quite a bit about  
12 what's going on there. I don't think that I've  
13 heard anything that encompasses any drilling of  
14 wells.

15                   Okay? So there was some talk about  
16 wells and what happened to the wells in question.

17                   I would also just like to express that  
18 the pipeline has a much better safety record than  
19 alternative transports such as rail and other means  
20 of transporting fuels around the country.

21                   I'd also like everyone to know we're  
22 talking about - a lot of people are talking about  
23 the impact - the impacts on the environment. The  
24 company that's responsible for building the  
25 powerhouse project itself has also been responsible

1 form remediating a lot of waste in the Birdsboro and  
2 Berks County area. Huge amounts of polychlorinated  
3 biphenyl, which is a cancer-causing product, that's  
4 in the ground at the project site. That's been  
5 remediated and taken off the site.

6 So they've done a huge job in cleaning  
7 up our county, a bunch of stuff that was left behind  
8 by the previous owners, that would have just stayed  
9 in the water and in the ground.

10 So of all the things that people are  
11 bringing up about the pipeline, there are a lot of  
12 good things that are coming of this project.

13 So I would encourage the permitting  
14 also. And I appreciate your time. Thank you.

15 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, Bryant.

16 John Cole.

17 MR. COLE: I did want to try and speak  
18 privately, but I feel given what was stated earlier  
19 it's fully appropriate that this is said.

20 So moving on, my name is John Cole. I  
21 was born in Union Township. And I basically grew up  
22 on public land. I grew up spending a lot of my  
23 childhood in French Creek, Hay Creek River, down the  
24 street from here, the local reservoir, and Hopewell  
25 Furnace, which is about five, ten miles from here.

1 I am a former employee of Hopewell  
2 Furnace and of Blue Marsh Lake up near Reading, Bern  
3 Township. I personally feel that we have a  
4 responsibility to the future, as any sensible human  
5 being would feel, to the children, their family and  
6 their extended family and anyone in this county that  
7 we care about.

8 We want them to have a healthy  
9 environment to live in and enjoy life and do the  
10 things that we live here for, nature, and just the  
11 expansiveness of just not being in the city. It's  
12 very beautiful and peaceful out here.

13 So I want to actually ask you guys a  
14 question and you guys can answer it. But can I have  
15 a show of hands for who owns a car in this room?  
16 Does anyone own a car? Can I have a show of hands?

17 We have a lot of car owners in here.  
18 Has it ever broke? Has anyone have their car broke  
19 ever? I thought so.

20 And who owns a cell phone? Anyone own  
21 a cell phone here? Has it ever broke? Yes, they  
22 always break.

23 And does anyone own a house? Ever  
24 need to make repairs on it?

25 No machine will not break. This

1 pipeline will break. And it's going to destroy the  
2 environment. It's going to destroy the water table.

3                   And my memories -. Even though I  
4 don't live in Union Township currently, my memories  
5 from my childhood are very, very green. Although  
6 I'm not there currently, I think anyone with a heart  
7 would want their children to have clean air and  
8 clean water and feel comfortable letting their  
9 children run free out in nature.

10                   Who in the world would not want that?  
11 And this is a danger to the neighborhood, the  
12 community. As far as the water travels under the  
13 ground is where it's a danger to.

14                   And as long as it flows, it's in Berks  
15 County, it's Chester County and everything  
16 downstream from here and everyone that matters  
17 downstream from here, they can't be here. And  
18 people that are - unfortunately can't be here.  
19 There's more people that couldn't be here tonight,  
20 unfortunately. I wish they could all be here to  
21 express -.

22                   But I recently read an article that  
23 explains what's going on. I recently read an  
24 article about power generation overseas in Iceland,  
25 a geothermal power plant. Now obviously you can't

1 use geothermal here. That would be crazy if you  
2 tried that here. But we have technologies that we  
3 don't use that are just waiting to -.

4 I mean, why even -? Why go backwards  
5 when we can go forwards?

6 Why invest in technology that is maybe  
7 cleaner than coal? Well, who the hell cares about  
8 coal?

9 I want to go forward. Let's talk  
10 about comparing it to solar, let's talk about  
11 comparing it to wind. Let's talk about comparing to  
12 anything, the many options.

13 I'm not a technological - on the  
14 forefront of technology enough to know all the  
15 options we have. But I know we can do better than  
16 natural gas. And every person in this room knows we  
17 can do better than natural gas.

18 So it just -. It just seems redundant  
19 and kind of just shooting yourself in the foot. I  
20 mean, this is 2017, we can do better than this in  
21 2017. And everyone in this room knows that.

22 And I wanted to -. Actually, this  
23 last comment - based off of some of the gentlemen  
24 that were pro pipeline. These corporations that are  
25 doing this are not men - men-caring entities. They

1 have no concern about the well-being of our  
2 community.

3                   They're -. Corporations are a  
4 business, an institution that has one chartered  
5 goal. And that goal is their bottom line. And they  
6 might do something that they put money towards a  
7 certain project here, so they get advertised about  
8 it to get more money in the long term from them.

9                   They do not care about the long-term  
10 health of this community. They don't have an  
11 incentive to.

12                   So I'd like to remind the gentlemen  
13 here that no matter what pros it might dish out, it  
14 doesn't even -. It's not -.

15                   In the grand context of everything, it  
16 makes no sense, because it's not benefiting anything  
17 here. We have options that are so much more  
18 powerful and so much more - could create more jobs  
19 and more long-term success and bring more money in  
20 and more revenue and actually make this place  
21 appealing to more investment in the future.

22                   So I think I might be out of time. So  
23 I just want to say, let's bring back the future  
24 technologies of energy to the U.S. And although I  
25 love Europe, we can do better here in the US of A.

1 and lead technology like we should be, like we did  
2 about half a century ago. Thank you.

3 MR. REPETZ: Thank you, John.

4 David DeWalt.

5 MR. DEWALT: Thank you for letting me  
6 speak today.

7 It seems to me we all enjoy talking  
8 about the dangers of gas and gas production in  
9 Pennsylvania. So I made a list just offhand of the  
10 things that I thought were pretty dangerous.

11 First of all, heating up things is  
12 very dangerous. It's dangerous to use them later  
13 and it's also dangerous and poisonous. And it's  
14 also flammable.

15 And we're going to be using this  
16 methane about two blocks away from the people of  
17 Birdsboro. That seems like a very dangerous thing  
18 to do. But they told me that it's all controlled  
19 and that there's no heat and things like that. And  
20 I'll get to that later.

21 But in addition to that, there's all  
22 the fracking chemicals that they use. They're also  
23 coming back with all this gas. So along with the  
24 gas itself, there's also fracking chemicals like  
25 VOCs, which are volatile organic compounds, toluene,

1 and etcetera, etcetera.

2                   But there's also heavy metals like  
3 mercury and arsenic. And so all these chemicals are  
4 also coming down with this methane. So when we burn  
5 this, we're burning these toxic chemicals and all  
6 that -. All those fumes are going into the air.  
7 And the air is just going to rain it back down on  
8 our watershed. The watershed that I live in.

9                   And I live in Pennsylvania because I  
10 love the clean water that we have here and the  
11 natural resources that we have. Except that I'm  
12 learning that since it got hotter, you know, I can't  
13 go trout fishing anymore, because the trout are  
14 disappearing.

15                   So my questions get down to this, if  
16 there are these dangerous chemicals in this toxic  
17 mixture that we're shipping through pipelines, who's  
18 responsible for regulating that mixture for leaks?  
19 Do they do it on an annual basis? Do they do it on  
20 a daily basis? Do they do it on a monthly basis?  
21 Or do they even do it at all?

22                   Do they do like they do out west,  
23 where they have a central location that has all  
24 these lights on the board and if a light goes on  
25 then they send out an investigator to look at it?

1                   But from my understanding, even with  
2 all these supposedly high-tech monitoring devices  
3 they still miss most of the leaks that happen. So  
4 if there's a leak in Pennsylvania, if there's a leak  
5 in Berks County, who is responsible for that leak?  
6 Is it the company that built it or us taxpayers?  
7 Are we responsible to fix their mess?

8                   Next, I did some research right before  
9 I came over here. And they said that for pipelines  
10 that are related to drilling, five percent of the  
11 wells that are drilled and five percent of the  
12 pipelines actually leak one year afterwards. So  
13 there are leaks that we have that I'm trying to find  
14 out who's responsible for those leaks.

15                   But it gets even better, because after  
16 five years it goes up to ten percent. After 20  
17 years -. Well after 50 years, 95 percent of the  
18 wells and pipes will have leaks.

19                   And so my question is who's  
20 responsible for those leaks? Are we going to trust  
21 the same people who built them to fix those leaks?  
22 And from my experience, that won't happen.

23                   So what's really going to happen is  
24 they're all going to leak and then eventually  
25 they'll get dangerous just like the other ones, the

1 old ones in Pennsylvania. And so I'm going to leave  
2 a legacy to my children that they're going to have  
3 to fix this at some time in the future. And that's  
4 just appalling to me.

5           The fact that we can build something  
6 that is so flawed and we're going to leave my son to  
7 have to clean it up. He's already blaming - saying,  
8 dad, how did you get us involved in all these stupid  
9 wars? And I have nothing to say to him. I mean, I  
10 don't know what to say. I said, I didn't vote that  
11 way is what I'm telling you. And I'll say that to  
12 the Trump supporters in back.

13           You know, I'm tired of these guys  
14 going for quick solutions so that you can gain a  
15 little bit. Don't you believe that you can have  
16 green jobs that don't require you to work with  
17 poisonous materials? Don't you think you could have  
18 a higher standard of living if you would support  
19 some type of structure that give us advantages in  
20 green fuels? Don't you think that, do you really?

21           I don't know what else to say to my  
22 kids. All right. Thank you.

23           MR. REPETZ: Okay.

24           That concludes the list of folks that  
25 signed up at the door on their way in. We do have

1 some time left. Does anybody still here need to  
2 offer any comments? The floor's open if you care to  
3 come up and speak.

4 Okay.

5 Seeing none, I want to thank you for  
6 taking your time to participate in this process here  
7 this evening.

8 Written comments, again, can be  
9 submitted to DEP - number six, 420, depending on the  
10 permit -.

11 Speakers, I'd ask if you would please,  
12 please turn in a copy of your written comments if  
13 you can to us before you leave tonight. If you  
14 haven't already done so, please sign our sign-up  
15 sheet on your way out the door.

16 And again, thank you for your time  
17 this evening, your attention and your cooperation.

18 And this concludes this public  
19 hearing. Thank you. Have a good night.

20 \* \* \* \* \*

21 HEARING CONCLUDED AT 7:48 P.M.

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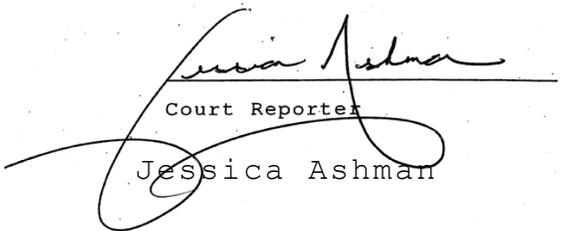
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I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings,  
a meeting held before Mr. Repetz was reported by me on  
11/02/2017, and that I, Jessica Ashman, read this  
transcript and that I attest that this transcript is a  
true and accurate record of the proceeding.

  
Court Reporter  
Jessica Ashman