

PF 15-1

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

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The Honorable Norman C. Bay  
FERC Chairman  
888 First Street NE  
Washington, D.C. 20426

Dear Chairman Bay:

I am writing regarding the PennEast natural gas pipeline application (Docket No. PF15-1-000) currently pending before FERC. Many of my constituents, municipalities within my district and environmental and other civic-minded organizations have expressed deep concern, and in many cases, outright opposition to the project.

I have significant concerns about PennEast's project path and expected use of lands under farmland preservation protection and within the Delaware River watershed. These are environmentally sensitive open space areas that I have fought to protect and preserve while a member of the New Jersey Legislature and I believe it would be fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to allow taxpayer protected open space to be used in this manner. As such I request that FERC consider the impact on preserved land and preservation programs with great care.

I also express my strong reservations about the potential use of eminent domain in this situation. I have heard from many Hunterdon County, New Jersey landowners personally who fear the federal government will eventually invoke the right of eminent domain to compel the sale of easements and right-of-ways along the proposed pipeline route. I respectfully request that FERC use eminent domain authority only in the most limited and extreme cases that benefit public use and not private corporate entities.

Federal agencies must consider cumulative impacts and a range of options to major federal actions as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. To do this effectively in the case of the proposed PennEast pipeline requires consideration of existing pipelines and other pipeline proposals within the same region and market when assessing impacts and other routes. Thus, rather than a more limited, individual environmental impact statement, I urge FERC instead to conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the PennEast line that will more accurately and comprehensively establish the need for and impacts of the proposal.

In conclusion I urge FERC in the strongest terms to scrutinize the PennEast application very closely to ascertain the business case for the pipeline as well as any potential adverse impacts to the environment on public or private lands and residents' quality of life and property rights along the proposed route, and ask that you keep me and my staff apprised of the status and scope of your process going forward. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress  
Seventh District, New Jersey

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