



**Township of Holland**  
IN  
HUNTERDON COUNTY

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August 5, 2015

Senator Michael J. Doherty  
Assemblyman John DiMaio  
Assemblyman Erik Peterson  
Hunterdon Freeholder Director John King  
Hunterdon Freeholder Deputy Director Suzanne Lagay  
Hunterdon Freeholder J. Matthew Holt  
Hunterdon Freeholder John E. Lanza  
Hunterdon Freeholder Robert G. Walton

Representatives,

As you know, Holland Township is one of five Hunterdon County municipalities on the proposed route of the PennEast natural gas pipeline. We are writing to ask your help in ensuring that state agencies are rigorous in protecting the resources threatened by this project.

Holland Township is very concerned about the adverse environmental impacts of this pipeline project, principally the effect on the high-quality streams, wetlands, and associated buffers in our township, but also the damage to forests, scenic views, habitat for threatened and endangered species, and historic resources.

There are many disturbing aspects to PennEast's plans, including the threatened use of Eminent Domain, the use of preserved farmland and Green Acres open space paid for with local, county and state tax dollars, and possible FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) claims of preemption of state and local laws and regulations. Because of our concerns, the Holland Township Committee adopted a resolution in October 2014 opposing the PennEast pipeline.

We hear frequently from Holland residents complaining about the difficulty obtaining a permit from NJ DEP for what they see as a simple project such as putting in a new driveway. We ask your assistance in making sure that the DEP applies the same rigor to this proposal from a large corporation as they do to a permit for a homeowner. No favors for the powerful. No bending the rules for the well-connected.

There is reason for some optimism based on DEP comments filed with FERC on July 2, 2015. We have attached a copy of those DEP comments. The agency urges such good ideas as the use of direction drilling under streams rather than just trenching through the stream bed. They say that PennEast's Resource Reports do not provide nearly enough information to be ready for a permit application. They insist that before PennEast attempts any surveys for threatened and endangered species, they must submit their plans to DEP to determine if the survey plans are adequate.

Nonetheless, there are important elements missing from the DEP comment letter. There is no mention of stream buffers, despite their importance to the health of the streams. Buffers shade the stream to ensure the water stays cold enough for trout to survive. They hinder stormwater run-off that can degrade water quality.

The DEP needs to take a strong stand to defend the entire stream system, not just the stream itself. And they need to be prepared to defend the legitimacy of their own regulations. If PennEast feels the NJ DEP is slowing down their break-neck schedule, they may ask FERC to preempt all of our state regulations that protect streams. We would hope that DEP would defend their rules as implementations of the federal Clean Water Act, and such federal rules cannot be preempted by FERC. Connecticut was able to defend its state regulations on that basis in a recent case.

We hope in any contacts you have with leaders at NJ DEP, you will praise the DEP for their July 2 comments, urge them to hold fast in applying their rules, and be prepared to defend New Jersey's right to protect our own natural resources.

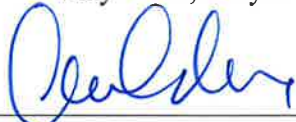
The Holland Township Committee



Ray Krov, Mayor



Dan Bush, Deputy Mayor



Tony Roselle, Committeeman



Tom Scheibener, Committeeman



Ken Vogel, Committeeman