



August 26, 2022

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
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Submitted via Email

**Re: Request for Extension of Public Comment Period beyond October 12 for Chapter 105, Chapter 102 E&S Applications - Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, REAE (FERC Docket No. CP21-94-000) (PA Permit Nos. ESG830021002-00, E4083221-006, E4583221-002, various municipalities, Bucks, Chester, Luzerne, Monroe and Northampton, Counties) - [Pa.B. Doc. No. 22-1297. Filed for public inspection August 26, 2022, 9AM]**

To whom it may concern:

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) is providing the following extension request and would first like to object to the Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 permits being approved due to the impacts and threats that fracked natural gas is causing to the climate, in the shale fields, in Pennsylvania's community and known health impacts where drilling is occurring, in our waterbodies and impacts to Pennsylvania's air, forests, and public lands. More locally, it is especially concerning the number of Exceptional value and high quality streams that would be cut through yet again by this pipeline expansion. On quick review it appears that most proposed waterbody cuts remain open cuts with little or no special consideration by the applicant for these anti-degradation streams and no pre or post monitoring of water quality included that would once again if approved, leave Pennsylvania taxpayers and water resources holding the bag from long term repetitive harms pipelines inflict to the very cleanest of our waterways, forests and wetland habitats.

DRN kindly requests at least a 90-day extension of public comment beyond the October 12, 2022 public comment period window be issued by the Pennsylvania Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP) as it reviews Transco's proposed Regional Access Expansion (Transco REAE) a segmented natural gas pipeline project of the larger Transco line that has already inflicted additional harm from other recent projects like the Transco Leidy Southeast Line (Franklin Loop). DRN requests that based on community concern and

the large impacts proposed for 5 counties, additional public hearing time and hearings be added. The current announcement allows for only three hours of virtual public comment (limit of 3 mins per speaker and only one representative per organization) for this pipeline for October 5 from 7-10pm which will not be adequate. With only one hearing date announced DEP is also excluding public who cannot make it on that one particular date. We also raise the point that a pipeline of this magnitude should warrant in person hearings as well (if it is safe to do so with pandemic conditions). Individuals who wish to observe or present testimony at the formal virtual public hearing must contact Colleen Connolly at 570-826-2035 or [coconnolly@pa.gov](mailto:coconnolly@pa.gov), a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the hearing to reserve time to present testimony. We would argue that it is important that this be revised so that if time remains, people who are listening in and have not officially signed up "24 hours in advance" are allowed to speak. By cutting off the timeframe 24 hours in advance, again DEP is automatically excluding the public from fully participating by the way the announcement reads as is as well as by likely limiting last minute community members to weigh in. DRN also kindly requests that DEP make it known early in this comment period just announced today, August 26, 2022 if the extension is granted so that the public can adapt and respond accordingly (Note DEP's past fast turn around for extensions granted to the pipeline company – i.e. Transco ext request made on July 27 and DEP grants extension on August 1).

In its application, Transco REAE proposes to:

- (1) Construct 22.3 miles of 30-inch diameter pipeline in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania;
- (2) construct 13.8 miles of 42-inch-diameter pipeline in Monroe County, Pennsylvania;
- (3) construct the new 11,107 hp Compressor Station 201 in Gloucester County, New Jersey;
- (4) construct an additional 15,800 hp at its existing Compressor Station 505 in Somerset County, New Jersey;
- (5) construct an additional 46,742 hp at its existing Compressor Station 515 in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania;
- (6) increase the certificated station compression by 5,000 hp at its existing Compressor Station 195 in York County, Pennsylvania;
- (7) modify its existing Compressor Station 200 in Chester County, Pennsylvania;
- (8) increase the certificated station compression by 4,100 hp at its existing Compressor Station 207 in Middlesex County, New Jersey; and
- (9) additional modifications to tie-ins, regulators, and delivery meter stations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

At least a 90-day extension is warranted beyond the October 12<sup>th</sup> period - with a series of public hearings adequately advertised in advance and offered because:

- First, Transco REAE only finally submitted and addressed its own deficiencies highlighted by the DEP multiple times on August 11, 2022. Transco had requested extensions multiple times during this process – the most recent extension request was July 27, 2022. DEP issued a letter granting this extension on August 1 and DEP has also issued multiple deficiency letters over the project timeline due to incomplete application by Transco REAE. The public deserves the same extension now by DEP as Transco seems to be moving on its modifications.

- In its prior correspondence, DEP granted Transco its extension requests and requested that all materials be submitted by Sept 30, 2022. The Transco documents submitted on August 11, 2022 are voluminous in nature and appear to include revised Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit and Chapter 105 applications that span the 5 counties. The public following the process believed Transco may, as indicated in the past, only send documents to DEP by Sept 30 based on past history or perhaps even miss that deadline given by DEP where DEP also stated they may withdraw the application for consideration at that time. Issuing the public notice now over a month and a half early and limiting the comment period to end October 13<sup>th</sup> is catching the public by surprise and also at a busy time when many may be on vacation in August or sending children back to school in the coming weeks while also juggling typical work commitments and daily family requirements. More time is warranted for the public.
- The Transco REAE Project is expansive in scope with abundant proposed waterbody crossings and cuts - this pipeline would warrant over 5 counties of impact in PA alone not to mention impacts in New Jersey and climate impacts world wide. On past review of the 401 application the aquatic resource table alone appeared to propose to impact at least 114 Exceptional value (EV) wetlands and 37 High Quality (HQ) streams in Pennsylvania. Because of the extensive nature of all three regulatory applications that involve vast areas of the state with many waterbody encroachments and steep slope disturbances, more time to dig into this information would only benefit the water resources that could be harmed.
- The three submissions just added to the portal (presumably on August 15) are voluminous in nature and include 1) Chapter 102 for 5 counties that when opened includes links to reports and attachments that includes over 52 separate documents and attachments; 2) Chapter 105 for Luzerne County which includes over 51 separate documents including other agency correspondence, modules and wetland reports, drawings, and alternatives analysis documents and mitigation plans among other documents; 3) Chapter 105 for Monroe County which includes 38 separate documents with revised modules, stormwater management analyses, alternatives analysis, color photographs, and drawings and more.
- On July 29, 2022, FERC issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC's Regional Energy Access Expansion Project under CP21-94. Volumes of information is requiring public review for this EIS at this time. Sadly, there are shocking issues and inadequacies with the Final EIS for this project. For example, FERC compares the GHG emissions of the project with state and national goals in a bare and quantitative manner—claiming that it cannot “determine how individual projects will affect international, national, or statewide GHG emissions reduction targets or whether a project’s GHG emissions comply with those goals or laws.” By acting as if the GHG emissions calculations are meaningless, FERC is essentially greenlighting projects that could incrementally exceed emissions

goals. Transco REAE, for example, will consist of 47.8% of New Jersey's GHG budget in 2050. Nothing is stopping FERC from certifying a second project that would consist of 65% of New Jersey's 2050 GHG budget, thus, FERC would be virtually guaranteeing that New Jersey would not meet its emissions reductions goals. This result is inconsistent with FERC's conclusion that it cannot determine the significance of the project's GHG emissions. Furthermore, FERC has punted and not addressed thermal impacts to waterbodies in the FEIS due to climate change or by the direct cuts of cut riparian forested buffers and pipeline cuts inflict. With these types of federal inadequacies, it is critical and logical that the state of Pennsylvania, that already bares a large burden (and responsibility as a polluter) from the fossil fuel industry and fossil fuel infrastructure and extraction historically and with the present shale buildout, provide more time for the public to adequately and thoroughly review these state permits. This additional comment review time and statewide leadership is needed now to provide much needed state leadership and ideally, a denial of the permit and pipeline project when the public process is borne out.

- No kmz or shape files appear to be included on the pipeline portal to assist the public in review of these expansive applications despite multiple requests for this pipeline and for multiple pipeline projects over the years – we hope the agency has access to these electronic files for more thorough review by agency personnel and sister agencies; and we urge these files to also be available for the public and placed on the pipeline portal especially in light of the short comment period. The documents exist and they should be shared with the public and posted on the portal.
- The PennEast pipeline which is another fracked gas pipeline project that had been proposed for parts of PA and NJ has been rejected due to its extreme harm and the pipeline project withdrawn. How does the Transco expansion fair with its own approvals that will be required on the New Jersey side of the River? Additional time is warranted and finite DEP strapped staff would also benefit from the additional time for this review.
- Several years ago, Governor Tom Wolf held pipeline meetings to encourage a more thorough evaluation and regional pipeline planning to avoid overbuilding of pipelines and redundant pipeline cuts and paths. It is not clear that cumulative impact review and overall PA build out is being pursued. The debacles of other similar pipelines, like that of Sunoco Mariner East 2 pipeline are also still in process. How is DEP learning from these past mistakes and approvals to ensure the same mistakes are not allowed with this pipeline operator? We must not simply provide fines after the harm is inflicted yet again using similar techniques, but eliminate that harm from happening in the first place.
- Williams/Transco's Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline (ASP) is another north to south 186-mile greenfield pipeline that cut across the state of Pennsylvania west of the proposed line in 2017 and began running natural gas October 6, 2018. In fact, at

that time communities opposing this line called it the “shortcut” for the already existing Transco multi-line to the east that is part of the proposed Transco REAE. Already this greenfield ASP pipeline has been expanded and not too many years ago a segment near the proposed REAE was upgraded with the Transco Leidy Line (Franklin Loop). How many more pipeline expansions does Transco really need and how much more harm can Pennsylvania communities afford from the overbuilding of pipelines to possibly export gas to the highest bidder using harmful and climate exacerbating LNG? The war in Ukraine the past six months and Russia’s strong arm tactics are making this a critical time for scrutiny so we avoid harms from harmful practices such as LNG export schemes or so called “blue methane” and instead of investing in more pipelines and methane extraction, we should be investing in clean truly green energy instead.

- There is also a long hard ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin (Basin) by the DRBC that has finally come to fruition during COVID and after community resistance since 2010– this ban prohibits slickwater hydraulic fracking wells in the Basin – this ban should also put into question why yet another Transco pipe needs expansion at this time to cut more paths through Pennsylvania streams, wetland and steep slopes and forests. Furthermore alarming new studies, for example the Yale School of Public Health Study that found children between 2 and 7 years old are two to three times as likely to be diagnosed with leukemia if they live near unconventional oil and gas facilities – more added proof and harm that PA families are sick from shale pollution <http://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2022/08/yale-school-of-public-health-study.html>. Pipelines like this one would only exacerbate and fuel more harmful fracking.

Thank you for your time and consideration to reject at best or at minimum announce an extension request of at least 90 days past the October 12<sup>th</sup> deadline with multiple public hearings with adequate advertisement in advance for the public to attend and provide thorough public review and comment. My Director of Monitoring, Faith Zerbe can be reached at 215-369-1188 ext. 110 or [faith@delawareriverkeeper.org](mailto:faith@delawareriverkeeper.org) if you have additional questions or information pertaining to an extension of comment.

Sincerely,

Maya K. van Rossum



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