

November 5, 2018

By Email

ra-eppipelines@pa.gov  
kyordy@pa.gov



**Re: Sunoco’s October 31, 2018 letter regarding PA-CH-0421.0000-RD**

Dear Mr. Hohenstein,

On October 31, 2018, Sunoco submitted a letter to the Department in response to the Department’s February 22, 2018 request for additional information regarding horizontal directional drilling (“HDD”) Site PA-CH-0421.0000-RD (“Site”). Pursuant to the Corrected Stipulated Order entered on EHB Docket No. 2017-009-L on August 10, 2017 (“Order”), and on behalf of Clean Air Council, Mountain Watershed Association, Inc., and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (“Appellants”), we respectfully submit these comments in reply. These comments first address Sunoco’s response point by point, and also raise additional outstanding concerns.

**1. Geophysical Surveys**

Though very late in the game, Sunoco’s commitment to conduct surface geophysics at the Site is an important step in the right direction. It is critical, however, that the Department ensure the geophysical surveys are adequate in scope and the results are fully incorporated into the construction plans for the Site. Sunoco has a history of ignoring and obscuring the findings and recommendations of its own scientists in the context of these HDD reevaluations. Commenters and the Department have identified this practice on multiple occasions. Sunoco also cannot be trusted to fully utilize the results of geophysical studies when it has vehemently rejected the usefulness of precisely such studies: in its previous supplemental filing for this Site, Sunoco claimed, “geophysics will provide no functional information” at this HDD location. To avoid Sunoco undermining the value of the geophysical surveying, both the raw data and the expert analysis of the results (including recommendations regarding construction) must be made available to the public with an opportunity to comment. There is also no reason such studies should not be shared, according to the sworn testimony of Sunoco’s Geologist, David Demko. May 12, 2018 Hearing Transcript, Pennsylvania State Senator Andrew E. Dinnman v. Sunoco Pipeline L.P., Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Docket No. P-2018-3001453, 700: 2-4. (Attached as Exhibit A)

## **2. Proactive Measures**

The proactive measures Sunoco describes in point 2 are not “supplemental” to Sunoco’s previous, inadequate submissions, but merely a recitation of practices that Sunoco is already required to use, has committed to using, or both. For example, in this October 29, 2018 letter, Sunoco describes using Annular Pressure Monitoring (APM) as a method of data collection; this was already addressed an earlier letter, submitted May 22, 2018, where Sunoco stated: “the HDD operator uses tooling, the Annular Pressure Monitor (APM), to actively observe conditions in the profile while drilling.” Moreover, the HDD IR Plan plainly requires the use of APM: “The following requirements shall be placed upon each HDD contractor with respect to drilling fluid control: Instrumentation – The HDD contractor shall monitor the annulus pressure of returns during the HDD pilot hole phase of HDD using an annular pressure monitor.” Similarly, the explanations of “tool face pressure” and “tracking of cuttings removal,” are not new or additional preventative measures; they are standard operating procedures that, while necessary, have proven inadequate.

## **3. Grouting**

In point 3, Sunoco describes two grouting measures it may generally use at HDDs, under the heading “Proactive Treatment by Annulus Grouting.” These grouting plans appear to conflict with earlier grouting plans Sunoco described to the Department, which involve the injection of bentonite chips rather than cement or sand/cement. It is unclear if both protocols will co-exist or this is intended to supplant the old protocol. If both protocols will co-exist, it is unclear when one will be used versus the other. They conflict, and so cannot both be operative. For example, Sunoco previously indicated that minor loss of circulation events can be effectively treated with loss control materials. Here, Sunoco says that they “are less effective below 70 ft of the ground surface,” which is where “[m]any of SPLP’s HDD profiles are.” Sunoco should clarify what it intends to follow.

## **Additional Deficiencies**

Other critical deficiencies in Sunoco’s reevaluation of the Site remain. Over five months have passed since Sunoco’s last submission of supplemental information for the Site. At that time, Sunoco had not made arrangements for replacement water for all residents whose water supplies might be impacted by construction. It appears that is still the case. No additional information has been provided to confirm needed outreach has been completed and necessary contingency plans are in place. The Department should continue to require such documentation.

Sunoco continues to ignore the recommendations made by its scientists in the hydrogeological report, including using a diamond bit to make steering easier through the gneiss formation where Sunoco has been warned staying on alignment will be difficult. It is also unclear from Sunoco’s most recent, boilerplate supplemental response, that it will appropriately monitor drilling mud pressure and utilize lower drilling pressure to mitigate steering problems. Veering off the drill path can damage surrounding utilities and water supplies and is especially dangerous in the densely populated area of this Site.

Finally, the summary of water supply testing results submitted by Sunoco still does not comply with the Order. A number of wells were not analyzed for E. coli, total coliform, and fecal coliform. Testing for such pathogens is explicitly required by the Water Supply Plan. Sunoco cannot rely on the incomplete tests it has summarized and landowners should be made aware that they are entitled to not only whatever testing Sunoco may have completed, but specifically testing for these bacteria.

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

Sincerely,

s/ Melissa Marshall, Esq.  
Melissa Marshall, Esq.  
PA ID No. 323241  
Mountain Watershed Association  
P.O. Box 408  
1414-B Indian Creek Valley Road  
Melcroft, PA 15462  
Tel: 724.455.4200  
mwa@mtwatershed.com

s/ Aaron J. Stemplewicz  
Aaron J. Stemplewicz, Esq.  
Pa. ID No. 312371  
Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
925 Canal Street, 7th Floor, Suite 3701  
Bristol, PA 19007  
Tel: 215.369.1188  
aaron@delawareriverkeeper.org

s/ Joseph Otis Minott, Esq.  
Joseph Otis Minott, Esq.  
Executive Director & Chief Counsel  
PA ID No. 36463  
joe\_minott@cleanair.org

Alexander G. Bomstein, Esq.  
PA ID No. 206983  
abomstein@cleanair.org

Kathryn L. Urbanowicz, Esq.  
PA ID No. 310618  
kurbanowicz@cleanair.org

Clean Air Council  
135 South 19th Street, Suite 300  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Tel: (215) 567-400

cc: jrinde@mankogold.com  
ntaber@pa.gov