



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

**Pennsylvania General Energy Company, LLC**

**Phase IV Pipeline**

**Joint Permit E4129223-006**

**Comment Response Document**

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## INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 2023, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP” or “Department”) received an Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit – 3 application (DEP File No. ESG294123017-00) (“ESCGP-3”). On September 12, 2023, DEP received a Chapter 105 State Water Obstruction and Encroachment Application (DEP File No. E4129223-006) (“Joint Permit Application or JPA”).

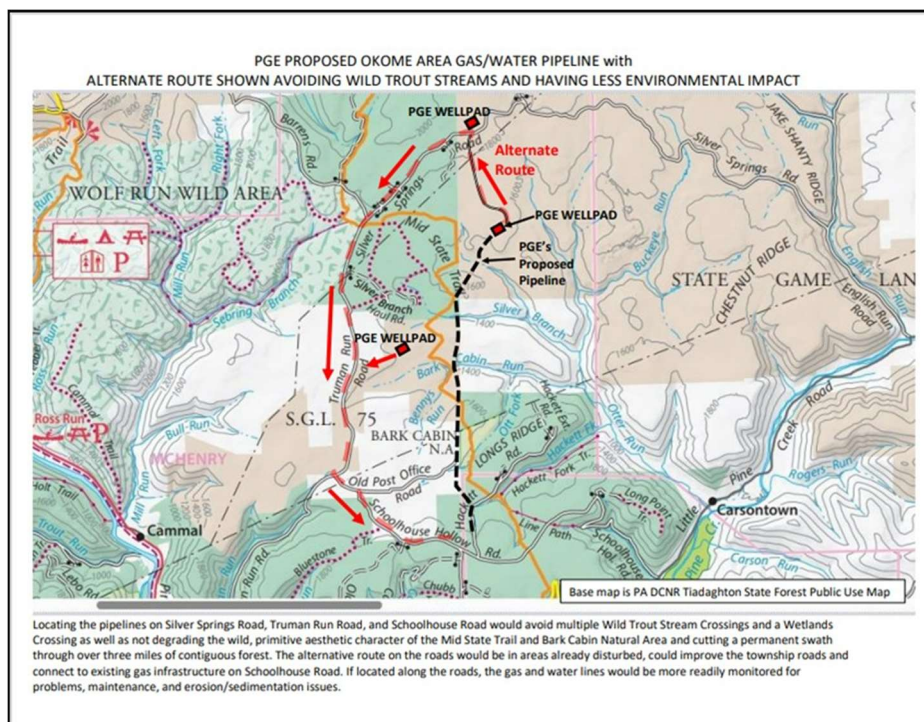
The JPA was submitted to construct, operate and maintain nine stream crossings and one wetland crossing in Cummings & McHenry Township, Lycoming County for the construction of 19,925 linear feet of one 12" natural gas pipeline and 19,887 linear feet of two 8" flexsteel waterlines within a 30' wide permanent right-of-way and temporary right-of-way that varies in width. All stream and wetland crossings will be open cut. The ESCGP-3 was submitted for permit coverage of the earth disturbance activities associated with the project construction. During the Department’s review of the applications, the applicant revised the project to propose 19,894 linear feet of one 8" natural gas pipeline and 19,855 linear feet of one 8" flexsteel waterline.

The applications include Act 14 notifications that were sent to Lycoming County, Cummings Township and McHenry on September 7, 2023.

On October 7, 2023, DEP published notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin (52 Pa.B 3443) regarding the receipt of an application for the JPA. The thirty (30) day comment period remained open until November 6, 2023.

On July 2, 2024, DEP conducted a virtual public hearing during which the applicant provided additional information on about the proposed project and the alternate routes evaluated. Public testimony was recorded and added as part of the JPA application documents.

This comment response document contains the public comments submitted to DEP by 70 commentors since the receipt of both applications, including the thirty (30) day Bulletin comment period for the JPA. The following pages contain the submitted comments and DEP’s responses. Comments are listed with identifying Commentor ID number and all pertinent responses.



**A complete listing of the comments can be found at the end of this document in Appendix A.**

## General Opposition

**COMMENT 1:** I am opposed to this pipeline and any additional development in this area. (1, 2, 6, 20, 52, 58-61, 63, 64, 70)

**Response:** The Department acknowledges the commenter's comment regarding this proposed pipeline project. The Department has determined that the applicant has satisfied the criteria for issuing the required permits, including conditions in 25 Pa. Code § 105.21 (relating to criteria for permit issuance and denial).

## Aesthetic Impact

**COMMENT 2:** The development of this pipeline corridor will have direct and long-term aesthetic and environmental impacts to the beautiful, cherished Mid-State Trail, diminishing the wilderness-like experience enjoyed by hikers. (3, 6, 57, 58, 61, 62, 64, 70)

**Response:** The project proposes to parallel and cross the Mid State Trail in two locations. The applicant submitted information confirming the coordination of the temporary reroute of the Mid State Trail to accommodate its use during construction as well as restoration activities, trail reestablishment after project completion, and additional tree planting as protection of the viewshed from the trail minimizing impacts to recreation per Chapter 105. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and the responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 & 105 regulations. Based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements. DEP's review of the applications and issuance of the permits for the project is consistent with applicable constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Alternate Route

**COMMENT 3:** The proposed route goes right through one of the wildest part of the State Forest Land and State Game Land areas of the Mid State Trail and hugging the western boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area. PATU is asking the Eastern District Oil and Gas Management Program to consider an alternate route with less permanent surface disturbance, erosion and sediment, that affects water quality, habitat, and aesthetic impacts on a beautiful and intact wild forest area. The common sense and safest route of the pipeline should be to the west on the Silver Springs Road on State Forest Land and Truman Run township road where it could be monitored and maintained much more efficiently. Please see the attached map. The current proposed route would decrease the riparian zone, and increase stormwater runoff and forest fragmentation which are all known stressors to our native brook trout. The increased risk of erosion and sedimentation could result in a reduced aquatic insect community, the filling in of spawning areas and an increased risk to thermal stress. PATU is requesting a public meeting to provide additional information about the proposed project and to allow concerned stakeholders to ask questions and comment on this important matter. (1, 3-29, 31-59, 61, 62, 63-68)

**Response:** The application materials demonstrate that the proposed route is the least environmentally damaging alternative. The proposed route includes the least amount of disturbed acreage while balancing small route variations to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources along the route. The alternate route (lime green) proposed by the PATU would not only include 17 times the amount of clearing on DCNR property, but the overall length of the pipeline and associated right of way would be over twice as long as the proposed route. The lime green alternative would increase length of pipeline paralleling Wild Areas by over 1,000 feet. The lime green alternative would also increase the amount of project impacts to wetlands by impacting wetlands located along

Silver Springs Road. Not only is the proposed route the least environmentally damaging alternative, the alternatives analysis demonstrates it is the most practicable by showing which properties are not receptive to pipeline access. This project does not qualify for eminent domain and permits issued do not convey property rights from landowners. The Department has undertaken a thorough evaluation of the application and found that the proposed action satisfies the constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Article 1 Section 27

**COMMENT 4:** I am a retired environmental regulator that frequently hikes, bird watches and fishes much of northcentral Pennsylvania. I, and many others, strongly believe in our rights as preserved in Article I, Section 27 of the constitution of this great Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania General Energy Company (PGE) has proposed a gas and water pipeline route called the Okome Area pipeline (Permit application# E-4129223-006). The development of this pipeline corridor will have direct and long-term aesthetic and environmental impacts to the beautiful, cherished Mid-State Trail, diminishing the wilderness-like experience enjoyed by hikers. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route crosses several headwater streams, at least one of which is exceptional value, posing water pollution risks both during construction activities and pipeline maintenance. The clearing of forests and introduction of heavy equipment causes forest fragmentation, and can facilitate the spread of invasive species, threatening biodiversity and damaging the forest ecosystem for many decades. Pipeline construction and the invasive species it brings can impede hiking and other pursuits, and it usually brings invasive Japanese Barberry and other invasive species that further damage the forest landscape and serve as habitat for small mammals that harbor ticks carrying Lyme and other diseases. The tires of heavy equipment can easily trap and disperse the seeds of barberry and other problematic plant species. In short, a pipeline will diminish the trail and the forest environment that surrounds it, destroying the peaceful quality of the forest, its biodiversity, potentially causing soil erosion and sedimentation of headwater streams, all of which is contrary to the rights bestowed on all of us through the environmental rights amendment. I support the alternative presented recently by several groups, including Trout Unlimited and the Keystone Trails Association. I am familiar with the alternatives evaluated by PGE, and find their logic and statements both laughable and shockingly absurd. I believe DEP must provide the public an open and convenient public hearing so that all those potentially impacted by this proposed pipeline can be heard. Alternately, DEP can reject the permit application immediately and advise PGE their proposal violates the environmental rights amendment. (57, 58)

**COMMENT 5:** All right. My name is Tom Pike, that's T-O-M P-I-K-E. I'm an environmental policy advocate with Protect PT, a nonprofit that seeks to defend Pennsylvanians rights to clean air and water under the Pennsylvania Constitution, Article I, Section 27. Article I, Section 27 reads, the people have a right to clean air - clear air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all people, including generations yet to come. The DEP has an obligation to defend these rights. It has no obligation to protect the profits of private corporations. Approving a pipeline over wetlands and exceptional value streams violates Pennsylvania's fundamental rights explicitly granted to us by a supermajority of voters in 1971. If approved, this action would open the state up to the potential for costly legal liability. Deny this permit. Thank you for your time. (70)

**Response:** DEP thoroughly reviewed these applications for the project for compliance with applicable constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements, coordinated with other Article I, Section 27 trustees, and considered the public input received for the project. Based upon this thorough process, as well as the project specific terms and conditions of the permits, the Department concluded that this project will not result in unreasonable degradation of public natural resources consistent with Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. The applications reflect avoidance and minimization of impacts, provide reasonable protections for public health and safety and the environment, and adequately mitigate the impacts to the Mid State Trail and other public natural resources.

## Compliance History

**COMMENT 6:** The permit now in question has been submitted by PGE, a company with a truly deplorable track record of violations when it comes to degrading the waters and EV streams of this Commonwealth. PGE began to accumulate violations in PA streams 2012 in the high-quality Pine Creek watershed with two brine spills and one diesel fuel spill. The total volume of brine spilled was estimated at 8,200 gallons; the diesel fuel spill was estimated at 89 gallons. DEP issued multiple notices of violation to PGE at that time, including violations of the Oil and Gas Act, Solid Waste Management Act, and Clean Streams Law. When the company moved to the Loyalsock watershed a decade later, PGE racked up 12 violations of the Clean Streams Act with the construction of a water withdrawal and equipment that subsequently needed to be re-permitted after installation because of a blatant violation of the original permit. In 2022, by your agency's own admission, DEP declared 33% of all Pennsylvania waterways to be considered polluted enough to harm wildlife, recreation or drinking water. Two years later, here you are, considering and no doubt poised to grant a permit to PGE that will bring further harm to multiple streams in PA where brook trout are already under threat by a warming climate. I submit that PGE's permit request is in direct violation to DEP's mission "to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment while fostering sustainable and equitable practices." Granting this pipeline permit as requested by PGE does NOTHING to "protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment." One look at PGE's past behavior in high quality and EV streams is proof that the company's ability to employ "sustainable" practices stands at zero. If PGE was an individual in court before any judge in this Commonwealth, and the violations the company has racked up were criminal acts or DUIs, PGE would absolutely be considered a serial offender of the laws of this state. PGE would have reached the repeat offender level that requires a license suspension and jail time. Obviously, that is a metaphor and not a request. What I am requesting is that past behavior be considered when new permits are requested. I am asking that new permit requests no longer be considered on a proverbial clean slate. PGE is a proven habitual offender. (63)

**Response:** The compliance history of PGE was considered in the review of the applications. Based on this review, PGE is not in violation of a final administrative action by the Department that would preclude the issuance of the permits. Its operations are either in compliance or they are making satisfactory efforts to achieve compliance at their sites. After review with the Compliance Section, it has been determined they have not shown a pattern of noncompliance.

## Degradation

**COMMENT 7:** I am strongly against the proposed route of the PGE Phase IV Pipeline in the Okome area of Lycoming County PA. My objections to the proposed pipeline are grounded in two areas: the pipeline's significant and destructive impact to the surrounding forest and the pipeline's degradation of the Mid-State Trail (MST) corridor. Under the current proposal of the pipeline by PGE, the route would cut crossings in nine high-quality trout streams and one wetland. This pipeline would severely degrade the quality of these streams through increased erosion and sedimentation. The route of the 3.7 mile pipeline would raze forests that protect these delicate stream ecosystems and it would increase the detrimental impacts of forest fragmentation. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route borders the Bark Cabin Natural Area of old-growth forest and this would severely impact this highly important ecological area through increased, and undesirable forest edge effect. The pipeline route would also negatively impact the MST corridor by decimating the existing trail and deteriorating the aesthetic value of the trail. I and countless other Pennsylvanians turn to public forests to benefit physical and mental health but equally to find solitude, reflection and communion with nature. Public forests belong to the citizens of Pennsylvania and they allow one to get away from the burdens and influence of everyday life. Yet it is disheartening to see that one of the most remote and isolated sections of the MST will become a sacrifice to ever encroaching industrialization from the gas industry. According to their website, "The Department of Environmental Protection's mission is to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment." Approving the PGE Phase IV pipeline is appallingly contrary to every element of the DEP's mission statement. This pipeline route would severely pollute and degrade the nine high quality trout

streams it crosses, fundamentally alter the land and eliminate the scenic beauty that so many Pennsylvanians seek to improve their mental and physical health. DEP should uphold their mission statement and deny this pipeline. (6, 8, 24, 34, 36, 52, 55, 58, 59, 61-64, 66)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP applications, and the responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapter 102 & 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Edge Effect

**COMMENT 8:** I would like to voice my opposition to PGE's proposed water/gas pipeline route which would intersect the Mid State trail and cause unnecessary degradation to a more remote forest fragment. Keeping Pennsylvania's remaining forests intact and reducing edge effect in this area is necessary for preserving healthy ecosystems, maintaining water quality, and providing valuable recreational opportunities. (8-13, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 29, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48, 64)

**Response:** While the Department does not directly regulate the cutting of trees in upland areas, application reviews evaluate the secondary and cumulative impacts in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105. The application demonstrates that PGE has sufficiently minimized impacts through reducing the right of way to a minimal 30-foot-wide permanent right of way; replanting of riparian forest buffers, as well as areas in close proximity to the Mid State Trail; mitigating impacts; conducting a PNDI consultation for sensitive, threatened, and endangered species; implementing Antidegradation Best Available Combination of Technologies Best Management Practices ("ABACT BMPs") to avoid and minimize thermal impacts; using native seed mixes; and conducting routing consultation with the PA DCNR and PGC. The Department has reviewed the applications and in conjunction with the special conditions of the permits, the Department has determined the project is in accordance with prevailing practices in the engineering profession and in accordance with current environmental principles.

## Erosion

**COMMENT 9:** PATU is asking the Eastern District Oil and Gas Management Program to consider an alternate route with less permanent surface disturbance, erosion and sediment, that affects water quality, habitat, and aesthetic impacts on a beautiful and intact wild forest area. The common sense and safest route of the pipeline should be to the west on the Silver Springs Road on State Forest Land and Truman Run township road where it could be monitored and maintained much more efficiently. Please see the attached map. The current proposed route would decrease the riparian zone, and increase stormwater runoff and forest fragmentation which are all known stressors to our native brook trout. The increased risk of erosion and sedimentation could result in a reduced aquatic insect community, the filling in of spawning areas and an increased risk to thermal stress. (3, 6, 58, 64, 67, 68)

**Response:** The project proposes ABACT BMPS and specific construction methods to minimize earth disturbance activities and to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation associated with those activities during construction. After construction, all areas will be restored to approximate original conditions negating any changes in post construction stormwater runoff including no additional impervious areas, minimizing the right of way width through the sensitive areas, stabilizing construction areas with vegetation, and replanting riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. The applicant demonstrates overall project consistency with the State antidegradation requirements contained in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 93, Sections 93.4a through Section 93.4c; 25 Pa.



Code Chapter 102, Sections 102.2, 102.4(b)(6), and 102.8(h); 25 Pa. Code Chapter 105, Sections 105.18a(a)(6) and 105.18a(b)(6). The application shows that the antidegradation analysis has been met for Chapter 105 application through the antidegradation analysis of the Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit.

## Exceptional Value Wetlands

**COMMENT 10:** The project would build three pipelines, a 12-inch shale natural gas pipeline and two 8-inch flex steel water pipelines within a 30-foot wide, 3.7 mile-long permanent right-of-way and a temporary right-of-way that varies in width. The company proposes nine open cut crossings of wild trout streams (Hackett Fork which is designated Exceptional Value; the others are designated High Quality Coldwater Fishery) and one Exceptional Value wetland. The proposed route goes right through one of the wildest part of the State Forest Land and State Game Land areas of the Mid State Trail and hugging the western boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area. PATU is asking the Eastern District Oil and Gas Management Program to consider an alternate route with less permanent surface disturbance, erosion and sediment, that affects water quality, habitat, and aesthetic impacts on a beautiful and intact wild forest area. (3, 67)

**Response:** This comment addresses the project as originally proposed; however, during the Department's review the applicant revised the project to include only one 8-inch water pipeline and one 8-inch natural gas pipeline.

There will be no net loss of wetland area. The mitigation plan details measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for temporary and permanent project-related impacts. This includes replanting 0.035 acre of the 0.054 acre of conversion of Palustrine Forested Wetland with trees and shrubs. Of the 3.62 acres of impacts to forested riparian buffers, 2.86 acres will be replanted with trees and shrubs. Additionally, 0.872 acre of the 1.427 acres of impacts to forested right of way will be replanted in the vicinity of the Mid State Trail. The applicant will also make a payment of \$23,810 to the Department's in-lieu fee program, PIECES, to compensate for the impacts to aquatic resources associated with the project. The plan also includes details relating to monitoring and maintaining the on-site plantings. The Department has reviewed the JPA application, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations. Based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to impacts to riparian buffers and exceptional value (EV) wetlands.

## Existing Right of Way

**COMMENT 11:** I am sending this in regards to the pipeline proposed for the Okome area of Lycoming county which will permanently impact high-quality waterways in a pristine area of the PA Wilds Region. I am OPPOSED to this pipeline and any additional development in this area. Why the gas company cannot use an existing right-of-way they have already cleared is puzzling. This pipeline will affect an array of high-quality fish habitat, impact wilderness trails such as the Mid State Trail, and impact important natural areas such as Bark Cabin Natural area. This should be immediately shot down by DEP and DCNR and not allowed to go through. This proposed gas infrastructure is a disgrace and should be immediately discouraged. The gas company needs to use an alternative route or should remove the proposal altogether. This area also depends on tourism, and it will be negatively impacted when people see the wide scar this infrastructure project will create. (1, 6, 9-13, 15, 17, 19, 21-25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48, 54, 58, 61, 64, 69)

**Response:** The application materials demonstrate that the proposed route is the least environmentally damaging alternative. The proposed route includes the least amount of disturbed acreage while balancing small route variations to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources along the route. The alternate route (lime green) proposed by the PATU would not only include 17 times the amount of clearing on DCNR property but the overall

length of the pipeline and associated right of way would be over twice as long as the proposed route. The lime green alternative would increase length of pipeline paralleling Wild Areas by over 1,000 feet. The lime green alternative would also increase the amount of project impacts to wetlands by impacting wetlands located along Silver Springs Road. Not only is the proposed route the least environmentally damaging alternative, the alternatives analysis demonstrates it is the most practicable by showing which properties are not receptive to pipeline access. This project does not qualify for eminent domain and permits issued do not convey property rights from landowners. The Department has undertaken a thorough evaluation of the application and found that the proposed action satisfies the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory requirements.

## Forest Fragmentation

**COMMENT 12:** Methane extraction and transmission via pipelines is heavy industry – loud, dusty, and dirty. It is incongruent with the thick forests, sensitive habitats, hushed solitude, and star-drenched skies one expects to experience in many wilderness pursuits. Threats to air, water, and wildlife are manifest. Landscape fragmentation and forest loss are collateral damage. Ecological impacts, while sometimes immediate, are often insidious as they slowly degrade environmental health over time. I have lived long enough to know what “over time” looks like when it comes to environmental degradation. I encourage you to step up, fulfill your mission, and truly begin to make decisions that protect and preserve Pennsylvania’s environment. What better place to start than by denying this PGE permit? (3,8, 57, 63, 64, 67, 68)

**Response:** While the Department does not directly regulate the cutting of trees in upland areas, application reviews evaluate the secondary and cumulative impacts in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105. The application demonstrates that PGE has sufficiently minimized impacts through reducing the right of way to a minimal 30-foot-wide permanent right of way; replanting of riparian forest buffers, as well as areas in close proximity to the Mid State Trail; mitigating impacts; conducting a PNDI consultation for sensitive, threatened, and endangered species; implementing ABACT BMPs to avoid and minimize thermal impacts; using native seed mixes; and conducting routing consultation with the PA DCNR and PGC. The Department has reviewed the applications and in conjunction with the special conditions of the permits, the Department has determined the project is in accordance with prevailing practices in the engineering profession and in accordance with current environmental principles.

## Healthy Ecosystems

**COMMENT 13:** I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. (8, 14, 16, 18, 41, 47, 50, 51, 56, 57, 64, 69)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and

other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## High Quality Waters

**COMMENT 14:** The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. (3, 6, 16, 18, 24, 41, 51, 54, 56, 60, 61, 63, 64, 67, 68)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapter 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Industrial Sacrifice Zone

**COMMENT 15:** We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. (9-13, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48)

**Response:** A public hearing was held on July 2, 2024 during which the applicant provided additional information on about the proposed project and the alternate routes evaluated. Public testimony was recorded and added as part of the project application documents. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Legacy of Timber Harvesting and Mining

**COMMENT 16:** I do not support the current pipeline proposal that would run through [S]ilver [B]ranch [R]un, [B]ark [C]abin [R]un, [']enny's [R]un, [H]acketts [F]ork and segments of the [M]id [S]tate [T]rail from [H]acketts [R]oad to [S]prings [R]oad. This would destroy the natural landscapes of this area creating a scar across the region that would be there forever. I have studied and I have seen first hand all the environmental destruction that has been done to this region of [P]ennsylvania. Adding to this destruction is repeating history. Repeating history of the logging industry that created areas of desolation across the state. It is repeating the history of the coal industry that turned the [B]lack [M]oshannon red. It will create a future where we will lose 3 miles worth of old growth forest, it will create a future where the [B]ark [C]abin streams are poisoned with the natural gas and associated chemicals.

Instead of this route that cuts through streams and other sensitive areas, I support the route below that follows the road. (4, 5, 8, 26)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Mid State Trail

**COMMENT 17:** On behalf of the Keystone Trails Association (KTA), I am writing to express our concerns about a proposed pipeline that would degrade the Mid State Trail – the state's longest hiking trail and one of its finest. The development of a pipeline corridor will have direct and long-term aesthetic impacts to the trail, diminishing the wilderness-like experience enjoyed by hikers. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route crosses several headwater streams posing water pollution risks especially during construction activities or pipeline maintenance. The clearing of forests and introduction of heavy equipment can facilitate the spread of invasive species, threatening biodiversity and, in some cases, impeding hiking and other pursuits. For example, invasive Japanese barberry has sharp thorns that can injure hikers. The plant is also a reservoir for small mammals that harbor ticks carrying Lyme and other diseases. The tires of heavy equipment can easily trap and disperse the seeds of barberry and other problematic plant species. In short, a pipeline will diminish the trail and the environment that surrounds it. KTA has championed Pennsylvania trails since 1956. Our mission is to promote, provide, protect, and preserve hiking trails and hiking opportunities in the Commonwealth. We well understand the benefits they bestow to people and communities. Trails, and the land that surrounds them, are important amenities that require and deserve careful stewardship if they are to retain the suite of economic, environmental, and health-related services they afford. Natural gas development activities in Pennsylvania have a history of disrupting hiking trails, accelerating climate change, and harming natural resources. The Mid State Trail would best be served by a diminishment of this activity, but, in the short term, there is a simple solution to avoiding the worst impacts of this pipeline to the trail. An alternate route proposed by Trout Unlimited would site the pipeline on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road. The wild character of the Mid State Trail would be preserved, and more contiguous forest left intact. Wild trout stream crossings and wetland incursions would be avoided altogether. The alternate route uses areas already disturbed and affords PGE and others better access for monitoring and emergency response. Outdoor recreation is a booming Pennsylvania industry, contributing more to the state's economy than natural gas development. The concerns of trail users and conservationists merit full consideration as do their ideas for ameliorating negative environmental and experiential impacts. (1, 3-13, 15, 17, 19-21, 24-29, 31-38, 40, 42, 43, 46-53, 55, 57-59, 61, 62, 64, 66)

**Response:** The project proposes to parallel and cross the Mid State Trail in two locations. The applicant submitted information confirming the coordination of the temporary reroute of the Mid State Trail to accommodate its use during construction as well as restoration activities, trail reestablishment after project completion, and additional tree planting as protection of the viewshed from the trail minimizing impacts to recreation per Chapters 102 and 105. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105. DEP's review of the applications and issuance of the permits for the project is consistent with applicable constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Natural Areas

**COMMENT 18:** The oil and gas industry is economically important, but outdoor recreation and tourism is also a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after extraction ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. The route proposed by Trout Unlimited takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. (1, 3, 6, 10-13, 15, 17, 19, 22-25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48, 58, 60, 64)

**Response:** The project proposes to parallel the Bark Cabin Natural Area on private property adjacent to the area. No clearing or earth disturbance is proposed within the Bark Cabin Natural Area. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105. DEP's review of the applications and issuance of the permits for the project is consistent with applicable constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Old Growth Forest

**COMMENT 19:** The route of the 3.7 mile pipeline would raze forests that protect these delicate stream ecosystems and it would increase the detrimental impacts of forest fragmentation. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route borders the Bark Cabin Natural Area of old-growth forest and this would severely impact this highly important ecological area through increased, and undesirable forest edge effect. (4, 5, 9-13, 15, 17, 19, 22-25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48, 64)

**Response:** The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources describes the Bark Cabin Natural Area as a scenic 7-acre tract of old growth hemlock trees. The project proposes to parallel the Bark Cabin Natural Area on private property adjacent to the area. No clearing or earth disturbance is proposed within the Bark Cabin Natural Area. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105. DEP's review of the applications and issuance of the permits for the project is consistent with applicable constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Open Cut

**COMMENT 20:** The pipeline route that PGE applied for would directly impact a pristine forested area in the western portion of the Otter Run watershed by clearing forested areas and constructing nine open cut crossings of high quality wild trout streams. This seems excessive when a viable alternate route is available. (3, 6, 61, 67)

**Response:** The application materials demonstrate that the proposed route is the least environmentally damaging alternative. The proposed route includes the least amount of disturbed acreage while balancing small route variations to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources along the route. The alternate route (lime green) proposed by the PATU would not only include 17 times the amount of clearing on DCNR property but the overall length of the pipeline and associated right of way would be over twice as long as the proposed route. The lime green alternative would increase length of pipeline paralleling Wild Areas by over 1,000 feet. The lime green alternative would also increase impacts to wetlands that are located along Silver Springs Road. The Alternatives Analysis also includes site-specific analyses of practicable alternatives to avoid or minimize project environmental

impacts including evaluating potential for horizontal directional drilling sensitive areas instead of open cut technologies. Not only is the proposed route the least environmentally damaging alternative, the alternatives analysis demonstrates that it is the most practicable by showing which properties are not receptive to pipeline access. This project does not qualify for eminent domain and permits issued do not convey property rights from landowners. The Department has undertaken a thorough evaluation of the application and found that the proposed action satisfies the constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## PA Wilds

**COMMENT 21:** I am writing to state my complete rejection to this project. This project is proposed to go through a remote primitive area teeming with wildlife. It will ruin our waterways, fish hatcheries, the sport of fly fishing, and so many wild animals['] homes. This is the PA Wilds! It is one of the most preserved places our State has left. This project will ruin that forever. We do not need gas lines, water lines, or more developed areas. We love this place for its nature and emptiness. We love it for fishing, for hunting, for exploring, for its rustic nature. (1, 11, 26, 27, 30, 43, 45, 49, 53)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations, and based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Public Hearing Request

**COMMENT 22:** I also believe the question of allowi'g PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. (3, 6, 9-13, 15, 17, 19, 22-7, 29, 31-33, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48, 54, 57, 58, 61)

**Response:** A public hearing was held on July 2, 2024 during which the applicant provided additional information on about the proposed project and the alternate routes evaluated. Public testimony was recorded and added as part of the project application documents.

## Public Lands

**COMMENT 23:** The Appalachian Mountain Club is concerned that the proposed project would negatively impact public lands and the popular Mid State Trail, known for its remote and rugged nature. The Appalachian Mountain Club asks you to require that the project use an alternative route that would align the proposed project in areas that are already disturbed, avoiding negative impacts to our public lands and the Mid State Trail. (9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 29, 35, 38, 42, 48, 66)

**Response:** The application materials demonstrate that the proposed route is the least environmentally damaging alternative. The proposed route was developed in consultation with the PA DCNR and PGC and includes the least amount of disturbed acreage while balancing small route variations to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources along the route. The alternate route (lime green) proposed by the PATU would not only include 17 times the amount of clearing on DCNR property but the overall length of the pipeline and associated right of way would

be over twice as long as the proposed route. The lime green alternative would increase length of pipeline paralleling Wild Areas by over 1,000 feet. The lime green alternative would also increase impacts to wetlands that are located along Silver Springs Road. Not only is the proposed route the least environmentally damaging alternative, the alternatives analysis demonstrates that it is the most practicable by showing which properties are not receptive to pipeline access. This project does not qualify for eminent domain and permits issued do not convey property rights from landowners. The Department has undertaken a thorough evaluation of the application and found that the proposed action satisfies the constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements.

## Recreation

**COMMENT 24:** We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. (8-13, 15-19, 21-25, 27-29, 32, 35-37, 39, 41-43, 45-48, 51, 53, 54, 56, 58, 62, 63, 66)

**Response:** The project proposes to parallel and cross the Mid State Trail in two locations. The applicant submitted information confirming the coordination of the temporary reroute of the Mid State Trail to accommodate its use during construction as well as restoration activities, trail reestablishment after project completion, and additional tree planting as protection of the viewshed from the trail minimizing impacts to recreation per Chapters 102 and 105. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations. Based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Remote Wilderness Area

**COMMENT 25:** I would like to voice my opposition to PGE's proposed water/gas pipeline route which would intersect the Mid State trail and cause unnecessary degradation to a more remote forest fragment. Keeping Pennsylvania's remaining forests in tact and reducing edge effect in this are[a] is necessary for preserving healthy ecosystems, maintaining water quality, and providing valuable recreational opportunities. As an avid trail runner and hiker, I can speak to the importance of being able to find solace in nature. Pennsylvania, unlike Western States, has become heavily developed and boasts few truly remote wilderness areas. This makes preserving what is left all the more important. (8, 22, 30, 36, 38, 39, 47, 64, 66)

**Response:** The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations. Based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources. The Department evaluates cumulative impacts during its review of an applicant's JPA application in accordance with Pennsylvania regulations including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102, and 105.

## Riparian Zone Impact

**COMMENT 26:** As you know, the proposed project would cross nine streams and one wetland, all categorized as exceptional value or high-quality, among the cleanest in the Commonwealth. In addition to being valued for their ecology, these waterways are prized by anglers and outdoor lovers as wild trout streams. As a result, I remain deeply concerned about the environmental health impacts of open-cut crossings of these streams (and the destruction of forests and riparian buffers) by three pipelines within a 30-foot wide, 3.7-mile long permanent right-of-way. (3, 58, 67, 68)

**Response:** The project proposes restoration, ABACT BMPs, and specific construction methods to minimize stream impacts including minimizing the right of way width through the stream area, restoring the channel to existing conditions, and replanting riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. Riparian specific seed mix will be planted, and of the 3.62 acres of impacts to forested riparian buffers, 2.86 acres will be replanted with trees and shrubs. The Department has reviewed the applications and in conjunction with the special conditions of the permits, and the Department has determined the project is in accordance with prevailing practices in the engineering profession and in accordance with current environmental principles as required by Chapters 102 and 105.

## Species Impacts

**COMMENT 27:** The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. (16, 18, 41, 47, 51, 56, 57, 62, 69)

**Response:** The project proposes restoration, ABACT BMPs, and specific construction methods to minimize stream impacts including minimizing the right of way width through the stream area, restore the channel to existing conditions, and replant riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. The JPA application was also reviewed in coordination with PA Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC) Fisheries Biologists to address concerns specifically related to the PAFBC's coverage of Commonwealth aquatic resources. The permit includes special conditions to restrict construction timeframes to outside of spawning, egg deposition, incubation, and fry emergence life stages of the wild trout population. Additionally, the applicant completed the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) screening to evaluate any potential impacts to state or federally listed rare, threatened, or endangered species. Potential impacts were limited to sensitive species regulated by the PAFBC and concerns are addressed through the implementation of recommendations provided by PAFBC. The Department has reviewed the application and in conjunction with the special conditions of the permit, the Department has determined the project is in accordance with prevailing practices in the engineering profession and in accordance with current environmental principles as required by Chapters 102 and 105.

## Stormwater Runoff

**COMMENT 28:** Locating the pipelines on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road would avoid multiple crossings of wild trout streams and a wetlands crossing, as well as not degrading the wild, primitive aesthetic character of the Mid State Trail and Bark Cabin Natural Area corridor by cutting a permanent swath through over three miles of contiguous forest. The alternative route on the roads would be in areas already disturbed, could reduce stormwater runoff, could improve the township roads, and connect to existing gas



infrastructure on Schoolhouse Hollow Road. If located along the roads, the gas and water lines would be more readily monitored for problems, maintenance, and erosion/sedimentation issues. (3, 6, 61, 67, 68)

**Response:** The project proposes ABACT BMPS and specific construction methods to minimize earth disturbance activities to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation associated with the project during construction. After construction, all areas will be restored to approximate original conditions, negating any changes in post construction stormwater runoff including no additional impervious areas, minimizing the right of way width through the sensitive areas, stabilizing vegetation, and replanting riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. The applicant demonstrates overall project consistency with the State antidegradation requirements contained in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 93, Sections 93.4a through Section 93.4c; 25 Pa. Code Chapter 102, Sections 102.2, 102.4(b)(6), and 102.8(h); 25 Pa. Code Chapter 105, Sections 105.18a(a)(6) and 105.18a(b)(6). The application shows that the antidegradation analysis has been met for Chapter 105 application through the antidegradation analysis of the Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit.

## Thermal Impacts

**COMMENT 29:** The current proposed route would decrease the riparian zone, and increase stormwater runoff and forest fragmentation which are all known stressors to our native brook trout. The increased risk of erosion and sedimentation could result in a reduced aquatic insect community, the filling in of spawning areas and an increased risk to thermal stress. (3, 67)

**Response:** The project proposes restoration and ABACT BMPs and specific construction methods to minimize earth disturbance activities as well as restoration efforts to minimize thermal impacts and mitigate for potential pollution from thermal impacts associated with the project including minimizing the right of way width through the sensitive areas, stabilizing vegetation, and replanting riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. The project does not propose to add any permanent gravel or impervious areas that would add to thermal impacts. The applicant demonstrates overall project consistency with the State antidegradation requirements contained in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 93, Sections 93.4a through Section 93.4c; 25 Pa. Code Chapter 102, Sections 102.2, 102.4(b)(6), and 102.8(h); 25 Pa. Code Chapter 105, Sections 105.18a(a)(6) and 105.18a(b)(6), and 25 Pa. Code Chapter 95, when applicable. The application shows that the antidegradation analysis has been met for Chapter 105 application through the antidegradation analysis of the Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit.

## Tourism

**COMMENT 30:** I am specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one is made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. (1, 7-15, 17, 19, 21-23, 25, 27, 29, 32, 35-37, 39, 42, 43, 46, 48)

**Response:** The project proposes to parallel and cross the Mid State Trail in two locations. The applicant submitted information confirming the coordination of the temporary reroute of the Mid State Trail to accommodate its use during construction as well as restoration activities, trail reestablishment after project completion, and additional tree planting as protection of the viewshed from the trail, minimizing impacts to recreation per Chapters

102 and 105. The project also proposes to parallel the Bark Cabin Natural Area on private property adjacent to the area. No clearing or earth disturbance is proposed within the Bark Cabin Natural Area. The Department has reviewed the JPA and ESCGP-3 applications, and responses and revisions submitted in response to technical deficiencies in accordance with the Chapters 102 and 105 regulations. Based on that review, the Department has determined that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirements in Chapters 102 and 105, including those pertaining to resource identification, cumulative impacts, alternatives analysis, antidegradation, and impacts to Exceptional Value (EV) streams and other wetland resources.

## Trustee Duty of Impartiality

**COMMENT 31:** Pennsylvania, unlike Western States, has become heavily developed and boasts few truly remote wilderness areas. This makes preserving what is left all the more important. In my opinion, it is a poor natural resource management decision to prioritize extractive means (logging, fracking, etc.) of boosting local economies at the expense of both the environment and local communities, who suffer at the priceless loss of forest and suffer the health impacts associated with these activities. The consequences of these management decisions degrade both the land itself and the quality of life for residents. They also come at the expense of the local tourism economy. (8)

**Response:** The Department reviewed these JPA and ESCGP-3 applications consistent with our constitutional obligations and in accordance with established laws, including the Clean Streams Law, 35 P. S. § 691.1 et seq., the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act, 32 P.S. §§ 693.1-693.27, and Pennsylvania regulations, including Title 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102 and 105, and made determinations of the proposed project's effect on health, safety and the environment in accordance with those laws as well as prevailing practices in various environmental professions and in accordance with current environmental science.

## Wild Trout Stream

**COMMENT 32:** The pipeline route that PGE applied for would directly impact a pristine forested area in the western portion of the Otter Run watershed by clearing forested areas and constructing nine open cut crossings of high quality wild trout streams. This seems excessive when a viable alternate route is available. (6)

**Response:** The project proposes restoration and ABACT BMPs and specific construction methods to minimize stream impacts including minimizing the right of way width through the stream area, restoring the channel to existing conditions, and replanting riparian forest buffers within the construction right of way. The application was also reviewed in coordination with PA Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC) Fisheries Biologists to address concerns specifically related to the PAFBC's coverage of Commonwealth aquatic resources. The permit includes special conditions to restrict construction timeframes to outside of spawning, egg deposition, incubation, and fry emergence life stages of the wild trout population. The Department has reviewed the application and in conjunction with the special conditions of the permit, the Department has determined the project is in accordance with h prevailing practices in the engineering profession and in accordance with current environmental principles as required by Chapters 102 and 105.

## Appendix A – Commentors List

NUMBER	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE, ZIP CODE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
1	Erickson	Maddie					mqe5065@gmail.com
2	Neylon	Jim					janeylon@comcast.net
3	Lichvar	Lenny	P.O. Box 5148	Bellefonte	PA, 16823	PA Trout Unlimited	lennyll@yahoo.com
4	Miller	Craig					craigles1557@gmail.com
5	Miller	Craig					craigles1557@gmail.com
6	Bennett	Mary	P.O. Box 11	Waterville	PA, 17776	Pine Creek Preservation Association	
7	Williams	Amy					amy.l.williams@gmail.com
8	King	Ashley					atking11@gmail.com
9	Calvert	Jeff				Eastern State Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTEAL)	jeff.calvert@esteal.org
10	Hartkorn	Janice					janice.hartkorn@gmail.com
11	Copenhaver	Jordan					jmc5040@gmail.com
12	Aikens	Brian					brian.aikens3@gmail.com
13	Slack	Nick					slacksipsdewlol@aol.com
14	Patel	Kunal					kpatel4703@gmail.com
15	Whitesell	Callie					cwhitesell12@gmail.com
16	Werner	Nicole					nikmwerner@gmail.com
17	Ketchum	Penn	516 East Woods Drive	Lititz	PA 17543		penn@penncinema.com
18	Rieutort	Debra					drieutort@gmail.com
19	Bowes	Tracie					phrie2bme@ymail.com
20	Patzer	David					davidjpatzer@gmail.com

21	Brown	Robert	1201 Cherry Street	Montou rsville	PA 17754		rbrown5415@g mail.com
22	Hess	Marlin					marlinhess@com cast.net
23	Rothenber ger	Lois	Ramsey Village	Jersey Shore	PA		
24	Gardner	James					jgardner578@gm ail.com
25	Michael	Kelly					michael@k3bfp. com
26	Watson	Julia		Cammal	PA		watson.julia.ann @gmail.com
27	Copenhaf er	Jordan					jmc5040@gmail. com
28	Groppe	Chris					chriscgroppe@gm ail.com
29	Haffley	Michae l					michael@bghaffl eyins.com
30	DeNardo	Lisa					lisadenardo13@g mail.com
31	Moyer	Kara					moymoykara198 7@gmail.com
32	Branham	Jason					sportsdio@yahoo .com
33	Friedman	Jason					jasonfm83@gma il.com
34	Noble	Adrian	2116 Pinto Road	Warring ton	PA 18976		anoble@gracelin k.com
35	Becker	Anthon y					antbec@gmail.co m
36	Fleszar	Peter	PO Box 885	Hunting don	PA 16652	Mid State Trail Association	pfleszar17036@ gmail.com
37	Vanderpla s	Kristine		Lemont	PA		kristy.vanderplas @gmail.com
38	Zakutansk y	Mark				BE Outdoors Mtn Club	mzakutansky@o utdoors.org
39	Stoltzfus	Kay					kaystoltzfus@gm ail.com
40	Eysenbac h	Benjam in			NJ		eysenbachbe@g mail.com
41	Walker	David		Danville	PA		dlw5065@gmail. com
42	Koons	Kiran					kirankoons@gm ail.com
43	Hurley	Ian		Pittsbur gh	PA		ianpatrickhurley @gmail.com

44	Baldwin	Jean		Harleysville	PA		baldwija@hotmail.com
45	Arbogast	Lee		Muncy	PA		leearbogast@icloud.com
46	Rachau	Tammy	8309 Nittany Valley Drive	Mill Hall	PA 17751		tmrachau@gmail.com
47	Travis	Matt					matravis6831@gmail.com
48	Abrams	Matthew					matthewwabrums@gmail.com
49	Kovach	Marrisa					reemattu@hotmail.com
50	Salaneck	Tania					tsalaneck80@gmail.com
51	Busada	Michael		Linden	PA 17754		mbusada@gmail.com
52	Williams	Allen	2014 Cypress Lane	Wyosmising	PA 19610		flyfisher_17250@msn.com
53	James	Dacia					djj6@pct.edu
54	Gardner	April					apriljoy922@aol.com
55	Pavak	Eric	PO Box 542	Oaks	PA 19456		eric@outings.org
56	Delorso	Mike					mdelorso13@gmail.com
57	Alters	Dan	229 Chicory Avenue	Bellefonte	PA 16823		
58	Comitta	Senator Carolyn	457 Main Capital Building	Harrisburg	PA 17120	Senate of PA	
59	Markle	Eugene	323 St. Charles Street	Schuylkill Haven	PA 17972		69pony@comcast.net
60	Markle	Eugene	323 St. Charles Street	Schuylkill Haven	PA 17972		69pony@comcast.net
61	Weaver	Jim	428 Copp Hollow Road	Wellsboro	PA 16901	Pine Creek Watershed Council	
62	Lenker	Brook	46 E. Main St.	Mechanicsburg	PA 17055	Keystone Trails Association	www.kta-hike.org
63	Jarmoska	Barbara	766 Butternut Grove Road	Montoursville	PA 17754		barbjarmoska@verizon.net
64	Gardner	James	1305 Lousia Street	William sport	PA 17701		jgardner578@gmail.com

65	K.	Karen				-	karenklouser@gmail.com
66	Lawrence	Edward	Virtual Hearing			Mid-State Trail Association	
67	Wagner	Brian	Virtual Hearing			PA Counsel of Trout Unlimited	
68	Martin	Steve	Virtual Hearing			Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited	
69	Delallo	Grace	Virtual Hearing			Protect PT	
70	Pike	Tom	Virtual Hearing			Protect PT	

## Appendix B - List of all Comments

### **Comment 1:**

I am sending this in regards to the pipeline proposed for the Okome area of Lycoming county which will permanently impact high-quality waterways in a pristine area of the PA Wilds Region. I am OPPOSED to this pipeline and any additional development in this area. Why the gas company cannot use an existing right-of-way they have already cleared is puzzling. This pipeline will affect an array of high-quality fish habitat, impact wilderness trails such as the Mid State Trail, and impact important natural areas such as Bark Cabin Natural area. This should be immediately shot down by DEP and DCNR and not allowed to go through. This proposed gas infrastructure is a disgrace and should be immediately discouraged. The gas company needs to use an alternative route or should remove the proposal altogether. This area also depends on tourism, and it will be negatively impacted when people see the wide scar this infrastructure project will create. Please lodge my opposition to this project.

### **Comment 2:**

Regarding the proposed Natural Gas, Flexsteel Water Pipelines in Cummings & McHenry Townships of Lyco County: I would like to offer my blunt, but respectful comment: Hell No!

### **Comment 3:**

The Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU), representing nearly 15,000 anglers and conservationists, is writing to express concerns related to the Proposed Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification for three new PA General Energy shale natural gas and water pipelines in Cummings and McHenry Townships, Lycoming County.

The project would build three pipelines, a 12-inch shale natural gas pipeline and two 8-inch flex steel water pipelines within a 30-foot wide, 3.7 mile-long permanent right-of-way and a temporary right-of-way that varies in width. The company proposes nine open cut crossings of wild trout streams (Hackett Fork which is designated Exceptional Value; the others are designated High Quality Coldwater Fishery) and one Exceptional Value wetland. The proposed route goes right through one of the wildest part of the State Forest Land and State Game Land areas of the Mid State Trail and hugging the western boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area.

PATU is asking the Eastern District Oil and Gas Management Program to consider an alternate route with less permanent surface disturbance, erosion and sediment, that affects water quality, habitat, and aesthetic impacts on a beautiful and intact wild forest area.

The common sense and safest route of the pipeline should be to the west on the Silver Springs Road on State Forest Land and Truman Run township road where it could be monitored and maintained much more efficiently. Please see the attached map.

The current proposed route would decrease the riparian zone, and increase stormwater runoff and forest fragmentation which are all known stressors to our native brook trout. The increased risk of erosion and sedimentation could result in a reduced aquatic insect community, the filling in of spawning areas and an increased risk to thermal stress. PATU is requesting a public meeting to provide additional information about the proposed project and to allow concerned stakeholders to ask questions and comment on this important matter. Trout Unlimited appreciates the opportunity to comment on this docket. Please reach out with any questions or concerns about this matter.

### **Comment 4:**

I am contacting you regarding the current plans for the PGE proposed okome area gas/water pipeline project. I do not support the current pipeline proposal that would run through silver branch run, bark cabin run, benny's run, hacketts fork and segments of the mid state trail from hacketts road to springs road. This would destroy the natural landscapes of this area creating a scar across the region that would be there forever. I have studied and I have seen first hand all the environmental destruction that has been done to this region of pennsylvania. Adding to this destruction is repeating history. Repeating history of the logging industry that created areas of desolation across the state. It is repeating the history of the coal industry that turned the black moshannon red. It will create a future where we will lose 3 miles worth of old growth forest, it will create a future where the bark cabin streams are

poisoned with the natural gas and associated chemicals. Instead of this route that cuts through streams and other sensitive areas, I support the route below that follows the road. Thank you for your time. Please do the right thing.

**Comment 5:**

I am contacting you regarding the current plans for the PGE proposed Okome area gas/water pipeline project. I do not support the current pipeline proposal that would run through Silver Branch Run, Bark Cabin Run, Benny's Run, Hackett's Fork and segments of the Mid State Trail from Hackett's Road to Springs Road. This would destroy the natural landscapes of this area creating a scar across the region that would be there forever. I have studied and I have seen first hand all the environmental destruction that has been done to this region of Pennsylvania. Adding to this destruction is repeating history. Repeating history of the logging industry that created areas of desolation across the state. It is repeating the history of the coal industry that turned the Black Moshannon Red. It will create a future where we will lose 3 miles worth of old growth forest, it will create a future where the Bark Cabin streams are poisoned with the natural gas and associated chemicals. Instead of this route that cuts through streams and other sensitive areas, I support the route below that follows the road. Thank you for your time. Please do the right thing.

**Comment 6:**

As the president of the Pine Creek Preservation Association (PCPA), I am writing to express concerns related to the Proposed Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification for three new PA General Energy (PGE) shale natural gas and water pipelines in Cummings and McHenry Townships, Lycoming County as appeared in the October 7, 2023 Pennsylvania Bulletin. PCPA is a non-profit environmental organization with over 1800 members with the distinct interest of preserving the natural and rural character of the Pine Creek Valley by facilitating various preservation measures through direct intercession or interaction with planning, regulating, or governing agencies and other conservation organizations. The pipeline route that PGE applied for would directly impact a pristine forested area in the western portion of the Otter Run watershed by clearing forested areas and constructing nine open cut crossings of high quality wild trout streams. This seems excessive when a viable alternate route is available. Locating the pipelines on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road would avoid multiple crossings of wild trout streams and a wetlands crossing, as well as not degrading the wild, primitive aesthetic character of the Mid State Trail and Bark Cabin Natural Area corridor by cutting a permanent swath through over three miles of contiguous forest. The alternative route on the roads would be in areas already disturbed, could reduce stormwater runoff, could improve the township roads, and connect to existing gas infrastructure on Schoolhouse Hollow Road. If located along the roads, the gas and water lines would be more readily monitored for problems, maintenance, and erosion/sedimentation issues. We respectfully request that the proposed route would not be approved and that a hearing be held to provide for public input from stakeholders, and obtain more information concerning why an alternate route with less significant environmental impact to water and forest resources should not be pursued. Thank you for considering our concern regarding this important issue.

**Comment 7:**

I'm writing to express my opposition to and concern over Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I began hiking, then running and backpacking in the region that will be impacted by the current proposal. I regularly travel with friends from the Philadelphia area to enjoy the unspoiled natural beauty of the region. We participate in and volunteer for PA Traildogs and Eastern States 100 races multiple times per year. I implore you to consider the Trout Unlimited alternative proposal, and the impact the current project could have on so many pristine water resources, before issuing any permits. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

**Comment 8:**

I would like to voice my opposition to PGE's proposed water/gas pipeline route which would intersect the Mid State Trail and cause unnecessary degradation to a more remote forest fragment. Keeping Pennsylvania's remaining forests in tact and reducing edge effect in this area is necessary for preserving healthy ecosystems, maintaining water quality, and providing valuable recreational opportunities.



As an avid trail runner and hiker, I can speak to the importance of being able to find solace in nature. Pennsylvania, unlike Western States, has become heavily developed and boasts few truly remote wilderness areas. This makes preserving what is left all the more important. In my opinion, it is a poor natural resource management decision to prioritize extractive means (logging, fracking, etc.) of boosting local economies at the expense of the both the environment and local communities, who suffer the priceless loss of forest and suffer the health impacts associated with these activities. The consequences of these management decisions degrade both the land itself and quality of life for residents. They also come at the expense of the local tourism economy. While I understand this project may be unable to be stopped entirely as is ideal, it would be negligent to allow the proposed route to move forward. At the very least, this project should reroute to the more developed perimeter to avoid crossing directly through this area of forest and trail. Our forests deserve more consideration than this.

**Comment 9:**

Please consider the attached comments from Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTEVA) in the decision about the routing of the proposed PGE pipeline. Our organization strongly supports the alternative route proposed by Trout Unlimited, and we request a formal public meeting for additional input from the public before a permit is issued.

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTEVA), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trail running and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 10:**

I'm writing to you to on the proposed pipeline route. I am an avid trail runner, hiker, and I volunteer often for the nonprofit organizations, such as Eastern State Trail-Endurance Alliance, PA trail dogs, and the Allegheny Trailrunners that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and I request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. I recognize that the oil and gas industry

is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one is made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 11:**

I am writing to share my position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited (attached), in accordance with the Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE). I believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am specifically concerned with this proposal because one of the biggest Pennsylvania trail races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline along with the Mid State Trail, a destination trail to Pennsylvania. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014, and I was fortunate enough to run it this year. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine for the Pennsylvania Wilds that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest (of which few remain) and unique scenic and ecological value. I sincerely hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route.

**Comment 12:**

I'm writing to share my position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. This route to me makes the most sense to not impact our trails, as well as our wildlife. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am specifically concerned with this proposal because ultramarathon trail races and public hiking trails, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. The priority of our state should be determining what is the best longpath results for our future generations hundreds of years from now. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you and be well.

**Comment 13:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTEVA), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 14:**

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you as a concerned citizen who deeply values the pristine beauty and environmental significance of our beloved state park. It has come to my attention that there are plans to construct a gas/water pipeline that will cut through this pristine wilderness, and I implore you to join me in the effort to protect this natural treasure. Little Pine State Park and its surrounding areas is not just a local gem; it is a global attraction that draws visitors from all corners of the world. Its untouched landscapes, diverse ecosystems, and abundant wildlife make it a unique and irreplaceable sanctuary for both nature enthusiasts and tourists. However, the proposed gas/water pipeline poses a grave threat to the integrity of this park and all that it represents. Allow me to highlight a few key reasons why the pipeline project should be reconsidered:

1. **Environmental Impact:** The construction of the pipeline through the heart of the park would undoubtedly disturb fragile ecosystems, endanger wildlife, and compromise water quality. The risks of leaks and spills are all too real, and they could have devastating consequences for the environment.
2. **Tourism and Local Economy:** Our park is not just a place of natural beauty but also a significant economic driver for our community. Tourists come from around the world to experience the park, providing income and employment opportunities for local businesses. The gas/water pipeline threatens this vital source of revenue.
3. **Climate Concerns:** As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, investing in fossil fuel infrastructure is a step in the wrong direction. We should be focusing on sustainable energy solutions, not furthering our dependence on finite fossil fuels.

In light of these concerns, I would like to propose an alternative route for the pipeline. Trout Unlimited, a respected organization known for its commitment to preserving natural habitats and promoting responsible resource management, has suggested a route that would minimize the impact on our park while still meeting the energy needs of our community. I kindly request that you consider the long-term repercussions of the currently proposed project and explore the alternative route put forth by Trout Unlimited. This route may offer a balanced solution that protects our park, its natural wonders, and the economic benefits it brings to our community. I urge you to use your influence to support a thorough environmental impact assessment, engage in a transparent public dialogue, and explore alternative solutions that safeguard our park. Let us work together to protect our state parks and ensure that it remains a source of inspiration and wonder for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Comment 15:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 16:**

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, and these activities play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and to explore alternative locations that would minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to make the **right choice** by relocating the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location that will safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 17:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE A), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. I am also very upset at the environmental impact this will have on our precious natural resources including streams and woods. **This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited.** It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 18:**

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, and these activities play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and to explore alternative locations that would minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to make the right choice by relocating the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location that will safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 19:**

I also am agreement to everything Jeff A. Calvert sent in the below letter. Please consider what Jeff stated for the less destructive alternative route. "I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE A), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request

that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 20:**

Under no circumstances should Permit #E-4129223-006 – Proposed PGE Okome Area gas/water pipeline route be approved. It will ruin the trails and waterways in the area. No more water and gas pipelines should be approved in that forest. The natural beauty and habitats of the area need to be preserved for future generations to enjoy. There is so little left of PA's wilderness we must protect it from companies who only think about their convenience. Do not approve the permit!

**Comment 21:**

I am writing to ask that if the pipeline is granted, the alternate route proposed by Trout Unlimited be the selected route. I have lived in Lycoming County for the past 35 years. It is a beautiful area that is rich in recreational opportunities including fishing, biking, hiking, bird watching, boating among others. The alternate route proposed by Trout Unlimited takes advantage of existing roads and eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions. It also minimizes the amount of standing forest that would-be destroyed. I volunteer as an amateur radio operator for the Eastern States 100, a 100 mile trail run. It amazes me how many people come to participate as a runner, spectator or volunteer. I bring to your attention the numerous abandoned wells in the commonwealth as a reminder of what happens in a lot of cases. In many cases, the companies come in, drill wells, run pipelines and then leave for the next section of the country to do the same things. Years later, the pipelines and wells start leak, destroying habitat and poisoning people and wildlife. Our area is blessed with vast recreational areas. The proposed alternate route, while allowing the water and natural gas to be transported appears to me to be a much safer and less destructive route that benefits both the Natural gas industry as well as the recreational opportunities and environment. I ask that you keep this in mind as you make your decision. Thank you

**Comment 22:**

Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) is proposing (Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification) to construct a gas/water pipeline through remote and primitive land between Little Pine State Park and Blackwell. The proposed route of the pipeline will have a significant impact on outdoor recreation and water quality in the area. I am writing to express support for the the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to be an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. The oil and gas industry is economically important, but outdoor recreation and tourism is also a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after extraction ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. The route proposed by Trout Unlimited takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant

old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route.

**Comment 23:**

I'm writing as a property owner in Ramsey Village on Pine Creek to share my position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and I request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 24:**

I am writing these comments regarding the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas / water pipeline route (Permit # E-4129223-006). I have lived in Lycoming County my entire life and I cherish the incredible opportunities it has for outdoor recreation. As an avid outdoorsman, I am very familiar with the proposed area that this pipeline would run through in the Tiadaghton State Forest. The most concerning aspect for me is that this pipeline would be detrimental to DCNR's 2019 Trail of the Year, the Mid State Trail. The proposed plan would result in a severe degradation to the wild nature of one of the most isolated sections of the trail (not to mention the crossing of 9 high quality wild trout streams and infringing on the old growth forest of the Bark Cabin Natural Area). I turn to the woods to find solitude, reflection and communion with nature- something that is becoming more challenging with every new oil and gas industry encroachment on public lands. But I do recognize the importance of the oil and gas industry for our regional economy and I think PGE should be mindful that they share the land with all citizens of the commonwealth. Public lands do not solely belong to them- there needs to be compromise. The oil and gas industry can coexist with those of us who value conservation and protecting our state forests. That is why I am writing in support of the alternate route proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. This plan is by far the most practical route for the pipeline because it parallels existing roads without unnecessarily crossing vulnerable streams/wetlands as well as preventing the reckless cutting of pristine forest. In addition, I feel it is necessary before any permits be issued, there should be a formal public meeting where citizens can voice their concerns.

**Comment 25:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is

a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 26:**

I am a home-owner in McHenry township, Pine Creek Valley. I am saddened and angered to hear of the proposed Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. This pipeline would have a heavy negative impact on this region. The Mid-State Trail is a premier trail in the PA Wilds. Why run a pipeline throughout when there are other options that would not disrupt it? Generations have worked hard to restore the Pine Creek Valley after the logging industry destroyed it. Have you learned nothing? As the Pennsylvania Department of *Environmental Protection* (DEP) your job is to protect the environment. You are failing with this proposed pipeline. I support the reroute proposed by Trout Unlimited.

**Comment 27:**

I am writing to share my position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited (attached), in accordance with the Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE). I believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am specifically concerned with this proposal because one of the biggest Pennsylvania trail races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline along with the Mid State Trail, a destination trail to Pennsylvania. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014, and I was fortunate enough to run it this year. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but I also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine for the Pennsylvania Wilds that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest (of which few remain) and unique scenic and ecological value. I sincerely hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route.

**Comment 28:**

I email to express concern over the proposed gas line by PA General Energy in the northern part of PA along the Mid-State trail, and ask that alternative paths be explored if this is a necessary project. The proposed line will have a negative impact on streams, water quality, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities. Thank you

**Comment 29:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal



public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention. Respectfully, on behalf of ESTEA, Jeffrey A. Calvert, President, Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance. I'm in agreeance with Jeffrey!!

**Comment 30:**

I am writing to state my complete rejection to this project. This project is proposed to go through a remote primitive area teeming with wildlife. It will ruin our waterways, fish hatcheries, the sport of fly fishing, and so many wild animals homes. This is the PA Wilds! It is one of the most preserved places our State has left. This project will ruin that forever. We do not need gas lines, water lines, or more developed areas. We love this place for its nature and emptiness. We love it for fishing, for hunting, for exploring, for its rustic nature.

**Comment 31:**

I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited because it takes advantage of existing roads, eliminates stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed. This is vital on the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value.

**Comment 32:**

I'm writing in regards to the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. Myself along with the entire trail running community strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 33:**

I support the alternate route decision as a past participant of Eastern States 100, and see a great cost-benefit in routing the pipeline along a road as opposed to primitive forest which would disturb multiple streams.

<https://easternstates100.com/proposed-pge-okome-area-gas-water-pipeline-route/>

**Comment 34:**

I am writing to you to comment on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I am a PA resident and hiker who has hiked on the Mid State Trail. I do not wish to see this beautiful trail degraded by the clear cutting that would happen with the proposed route so I am asking you to strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

**Comment 35:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. **We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits.** We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 36:**

I am writing these comments regarding the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas / water pipeline route (Permit # E-4129223-006) on behalf of the membership of the Mid State Trail Association (MSTA), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, with the mission of keeping the Mid State Trail (MST) open and accessible to all users by maintaining and improving its physical treadway and corridor thereby protecting and enhancing the quality of the overall recreational experience. The MST is a 'hiking only' (as opposed to multi-use) footpath as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) and was their designated Trail of the Year in 2019. It is known as Pennsylvania's "longest and wildest" hiking trail at over 500 km (300 miles), stretching from the Maryland border in the south to the New York State border in the north, and is the Keystone State's contribution to the long distance Great Eastern Trail which currently runs from Alabama connecting, via the MST, with the North Country Trail in New York State. The PGE route, as proposed, will have a significant, direct and detrimental impact on the MST by crossing it and degrading the trail corridor and viewscape on a section of the trail that the current hiking guide describes as being "one of the most isolated sections of hiking trail anywhere in Penn's woods". We recognize that the oil and gas industry's economic footprint in the area is formidable but believe that the industry must also recognize and be sensitive to the fact that outdoor recreation and tourism is also a vital economic engine for north central Pennsylvania. The Mid State Trail is used not just by day hikers and backpackers but also by hunters, fishers, bird watchers and mushroom gatherers along with the practitioners of the increasingly popular forest bathing. Getting visitors to return to a recreational venue after an initial visit is a cornerstone of successful recreational marketing. When people travel to a recreational destination that is purported to offer an exceptional experience and find instead an environmentally damaged and degraded landscape there is no

incentive for them to come back. They take their boots and their dollars elsewhere. Our goal, as volunteers, is to facilitate all users of the MST to have the highest quality outdoor experience that is possible in their preferred activity. We are therefore in accord with, and support, the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. This route takes practical advantage of the availability of paralleling existing roads, eliminating numerous stream and wetland incursions and minimizes the need to unnecessarily raze several miles of standing forest habitat which would result in a greater undesirable "edge effect" including along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest which DCNR literature describes as being a "remote grove of old growth" with unique scenic and ecological value. We also believe that the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough that there should be requisite public input. We therefore request that a formal public meeting be scheduled and advertised prior to any permits being issued. Thank you for your consideration.

**Comment 37:**

I'm writing as an avid trail runner and as someone who regularly recreates in the area. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord the Mid State Trail Association. I believe that allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and I request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. My husband has run the Eastern States 100 race twice now, a 100 mile race in Pine Creek Valley that uses the section of the mid state trail that would be disrupted by this pipeline. This race event brings hundreds of people together annually, many of whom come from out of state to enjoy the pristine wilderness of Pine Creek Valley and the Mid State Trail. Because of this event, my husband and I have returned to the area many times, supporting local businesses for lodging and meals. Outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 38:**

I am writing to you to comment on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. The Appalachian Mountain Club is concerned that the proposed project would negatively impact public lands and the popular Mid State Trail, known for its remote and rugged nature. The Appalachian Mountain Club asks you to require that the project use an alternative route that would align the proposed project in areas that are already disturbed, avoiding negative impacts to our public lands and the Mid State Trail. We appreciate your consideration of these comments.

**Comment 39:**

Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) is proposing (Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification) to construct a gas/water pipeline through remote and primitive land between Little Pine State Park and Blackwell. The proposed route of the pipeline will have a significant impact on outdoor recreation and water quality in the area. I am writing to express support for the the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to be an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. The oil and gas industry is economically important, but outdoor recreation and tourism is also a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after extraction ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. The route proposed by Trout Unlimited takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. I hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route.

**Comment 40:**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the planned pipelines across Pine Creek Valley (Permit #E-4129223-006). The Pine Creek Valley area contains some of the most pristine wilderness not just for northern PA, and not just for PA, but for many of the surrounding states as well. As a former resident of Pittsburgh, Pine Creek is where I would go when I needed to escape the city. Now a resident of NJ, Pine Creek remains some of the closest wildernesses -- not because it is nearby, but because so much of PA and NJ have been developed. In short, the area around Pine Creek is valuable because such wilderness is rare, and its scarcity makes it an important resource for a very large radius of recreating users. I hope that DEP can make alternate arrangements; the alternative route developed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Mid State Trail Association would be better. Wilderness is not like a pizza, which you can cut in half and share with friends. Wilderness is like a fragile vase -- once it is shattered (bifurcated by pipelines), the shards remain but beauty/value/usefulness is lost.

**Comment 41:**

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, and these activities play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and to explore alternative locations that would minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to make the **right choice** by relocating the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location that will safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 42:**

As a trail runner, and supporter of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due

to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 43:**

As a Pennsylvania citizen, I am writing to share my position regarding the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, along with the Mid State Trail Association, the Eastern States Trail-Edurance Alliance and others. I believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and I request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am also concerned with this proposal because the Eastern States 100, a 100-mile foot race that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, will be adversely affected by the pipeline. The course runs on a section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. The Eastern States race has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the East Coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. While I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, I know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. As a resident of the Pittsburgh area, I make specific trips to the Pine Creek Valley, and the PA Wilds area, multiple times a year for outdoor recreation and to do my part to support the local economy. The route proposed by Trout Unlimited takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. It is my hope you will act in the interests of the citizens of Pennsylvania, and the long-term viability of outdoor recreation in the area, and consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Comment 44:**

This proposed pipeline should be halted. This is an environmental sensitive location. Alternatives should be evaluated and put to the public for comment. NRDC, Sierra club and others will have media attention on this proposal.

**Comment 45:**

I am writing to you as an avid user of the Pine Creek Area and the Pennsylvania Wilds. Please consider the proposed pipeline reroute by Trout Unlimited. Personally I believe that the Gas/Oil industry is important and can coexist with outdoor recreation. I also believe that it's economically important for us to have this industry here in Pennsylvania. However, we need to preserve our Wilds area. Just as the department kept a PGE pipeline out of the Wolf Run Wilds area, please keep them out of this one too. A reasonable work around has been established.

**Comment 46:**

I'm writing as a local trail runner and outdoor enthusiast. I strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with the Mid State Trail Association. I also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. I am specifically concerned with this proposal because of a race, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has

been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. I recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why I support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 47:**

Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) proposes (Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification) to construct a gas/water pipeline through one of the more remote and primitive sections of the Mid State Trail between Little Pine State Park and Blackwell. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. I have enjoyed this area with my family and hiked and run many of the trails in this area. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high-quality cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, which play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and explore alternative locations to minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to relocate the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location to safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 48:**

I'm writing on behalf of Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that promotes trailrunning and the responsible use of public lands, to share our position on the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas/water pipeline route. We strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in accord with our friends at the Mid State Trail Association. We also believe the question of allowing PGE's proposed route to become an industrial sacrifice zone is important enough to justify additional public input, and we request that you schedule and advertise a formal public meeting prior to issuing any permits. We are specifically concerned with this proposal because one of our races, the Eastern States 100, will be adversely affected by the proposed pipeline. Eastern States is a 100-mile

footrace that circumnavigates the Pine Creek Valley, and uses the section of the Mid State Trail that would be disturbed by this pipeline. Eastern States has been drawing hundreds of people to the area from across the country and around the world since 2014. It is considered one of the premier events of its kind on the east coast due to the challenge of its course and the wild beauty of Pine Creek and the mountains that surround it. We recognize that the oil and gas industry is economically important to the region, but we also know that outdoor recreation and tourism is a vital economic engine that is likely to remain long after those extractive ventures have faded. The two can coexist, but only if decisions such as this one are made with the long-term concerns of both in mind. This is why we support the route proposed by Trout Unlimited. It takes practical advantage of existing roads, eliminates numerous stream and wetland incursions, and minimizes the amount of standing forest destroyed (with the accompanying edge effects). This is critically important along the boundary of the Bark Cabin Natural Area in Tiadaghton State Forest, with its remnant old growth forest and unique scenic and ecological value. We hope you will consider this viable and less-destructive alternative route. Thank you for your time and attention.

**Comment 49:**

I am reaching out to address the newly proposed gas/water pipeline that is to be constructed through parts of the Mid State Trail, particularly those that lie directly between Little Pine State Park and the village of Blackwell. I am not a natural resource technician; I am not an educated environmentalist. I am not a wildlife biologist; I am not an ecologist. I am not even a local. I was not born and bred in North Central Pennsylvania and I do not reside there now with my family. I am however a strong advocate for The Pennsylvania Wilds and the areas that surround it. I am mother. I am a friend. I am a trail runner. And I have left parts of my heart scattered all throughout the trail systems that make up this particular area. The rugged, raw and beautiful stretch of land that we know of as The Mid State Trail is so much more than just a footpath to follow on a cool autumn day, it is a byway of hearts. It is years of collective training and pounds of emotion. It is stories of triumph and lessons of heartbreak. It has seen our tears, acknowledged our hard work and listened to our secrets and it in return, has asked nothing of us. Under the canopy of these trees I was welcomed into a family. A community of athletes that come together and celebrate the beauty of these trails. We respect them. We acknowledge them. We live by them, we thrive on them and we will protect them. Every time I navigate these trails, I purposely leave pieces of my heart behind. I leave them there as a promise. As a gesture of gratitude. A tribute to mother nature for her generous gifts. I smile as I drop them, knowing they will be cared for. That mother nature will embrace them, welcome them and feed them until I return again. There is a connection between human and land that happens in the world of ultra endurance athletes. There is a longing in the soul that can only be fed by certain geographic areas. Trails that speak to us. Trees that breath for us. Roots we begin to name and rocks we memorize the shapes of. For those of us who can't seem to find peace in our own heads, we can find it on the trails. Please do not disturb this peace. With deep respect I am asking the board of directors at Pennsylvania General Energy to take a studied look at the lands we all love and find another route to direct this proposed Pipe Line. Nature has taught me more about morality and beauty and respect than any one book or person or amount of money ever has. Please come together as team for an alternate solution and show her you can live by what she teaches. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to acknowledge my concerns.

**Comment 50:**

As a long time Pennsylvania resident, avid outdoorswoman and endurance athlete, I would like to voice my concerns about the path of this proposed pipeline. My family has had the good fortune of having a cabin in the area, and I grew up in awe of the pristine forests and drank freely from the mountain streams. As an adult, I've grown to love hours of solitude on the trails and as a nurse, I value nature as a precious resource that offers humanity an avenue to heal us both mentally and physically. I understand the need to move resources across the area, and I hope you will take into consideration the alternative route proposed by the Eastern States Trail-Endurance Alliance (ESTE), Mid State Trail Association, Keystone Trails Association, and the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. As stewards of our priceless forests, it is up to us to speak up to minimize the impact of any development and push for the utmost care of this delicate ecosystem. Thank you.

**Comment 51:**

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the proposed pipeline project through the pine creek valley that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is of utmost importance that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. The Mid State Trail, and many others, are heavily used by many outdoor enthusiasts and are paid for through our tax dollars. These lands belong to the people, and we must be responsible stewards of them. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, and these activities play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I acknowledge the importance of natural resources such as natural gas as a necessity for economic development, while providing an affordable resource to the patrons of Central Pennsylvania. However, an alternative route must be considered that would impact the natural streams as well as the popular trails that we all so adore, and again I repeat BELONG TO THE PEOPLE. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and to explore alternative locations that would minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I repeat, I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to relocate the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location that will safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 52:**

I am extremely concerned that the proposed pipeline in the Little Pine watershed will have a significant, adverse impact on this gem of a trout stream. I have fished this stream and nearby tributaries and believe that the path proposed by PGE will degrade the watershed, fisheries and woodlands. I believe the alternative path proposed by a number of wilderness trail associations and the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited would be a much better alternative. I believe that pipelines ARE a highly efficient method of safely transporting diverse materials and avoiding heavy truck traffic on highways. HOWEVER, I believe that vulnerable natural resources must be considered carefully when choosing the paths of these pipelines. Please do NOT approve Permit E-4129223-006 as proposed. Choose the alternative route!

**Comment 53:**

My name is Dacia James and I am writing these comments regarding the Pennsylvania General Energy Co.'s (PGE) proposed Okome Area gas / water pipeline route (Permit # E-4129223-006). I am from Wayne, PA and I am also a recent graduate of Pennsylvania College of Technology. While I was at school, I became very familiar with the natural beauty of Lycoming County and all it has to offer in regard to outdoor recreation. Although I no longer live in Lycoming County, I have come back numerous times since graduation for the sole reason of enjoying the Pennsylvania Wilds. One of my favorite trails that I experienced is the Mid State Trail. When I heard of a proposed pipeline that would severely impact this pristine section of the trail, I wanted to voice my concerns. I fear that the proposed plan would forever change the trail that I have come to love in short amount of time. I believe that allowing this pipeline to continue as planned would further turn this beautiful area into an industrial zone. I choose to come back to Lycoming County for its outdoor opportunities and I am afraid that with continued impact of the natural gas



industry on these outdoor opportunities, it would no longer be worth returning to. I hope that either this plan is denied, or an alternate plan is accepted (one that does not cause so much destruction of forests) so that people like me who travel to Lycoming County still can experience the feeling of being surrounded by unparalleled wilderness and scenic natural beauty. Thank you.

**Comment 54:**

These comments are regarding the proposed PGE pipelines in the Okome Area (Permit # E4129223-006) in the Tiadaghton State Forest. I believe that the proposed pipeline would be a significant detriment to the natural landscape in this area of the state forest because it would adversely impact 9 high quality, wild trout streams. Our remaining wild trout streams are crucial for forest health, providing habitat for our state fish and for boosting outdoor recreation opportunities for all citizens in Lycoming County. I strongly support the alternate route proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Since this route uses existing roads, it would avoid destroying more intact forest and it would protect the wild trout streams in the Okome area. This is a practical and reasonable route- a plan that would take the needs of both parties into consideration. I also believe that there should be a public meeting so citizens of all sides of the issue can voice their opinions before any permits are issued for this pipeline. Thank you.

**Comment 55:**

I am a life-long Pennsylvania resident and a hiker and paddler who cherishes the Mid State Trail. I saw what happened when a similar project crossed Shohola Creek. I do not wish to see this beautiful trail degraded by the clear-cutting that would happen with the proposed route so I am asking you to strongly support the alternative route developed and proposed by the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

**Comment 56:**

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposed pipeline project that threatens to destroy our precious natural wilderness, disrupt wildlife habitats, and harm outdoor recreation areas in our region. It is imperative that we take immediate action to ensure the preservation of these invaluable resources for current and future generations. The proposed pipeline project poses a grave threat to the ecosystems of the high quality-cold water fishery and wild trout streams that are thriving in our region. The damage that would be inflicted on our natural wilderness areas is unacceptable. This project not only endangers the rich biodiversity of our region but also jeopardizes the countless species that depend on these habitats for survival. Furthermore, the disruption of wildlife caused by the construction and operation of the pipeline is inexcusable. We must be responsible stewards of our environment and strive to protect our native wildlife from unnecessary harm and stress. The potential consequences of this project are devastating, and we cannot stand idly by and allow it to proceed without challenging its environmental impact. Additionally, the pipeline project threatens to undermine the quality of life for our community and countless outdoor enthusiasts. Our region is cherished for its recreational opportunities, and these activities play a significant role in our local economy. The pipeline's proposed route would not only disrupt these activities but could also have long-lasting economic repercussions. I implore you to reconsider the proposed pipeline route and to explore alternative locations that would minimize its environmental impact. It is our duty to prioritize the protection of our natural heritage and to act as responsible stewards of our environment. I urge you to engage with experts, environmental organizations, and local community members to identify a solution that aligns with our shared values and ensures the preservation of our natural wilderness while also being able to utilize our energy resources. I understand the importance of energy infrastructure, but it must not come at the expense of our environment and the well-being of our community. There are alternative locations that can achieve the project's goals without causing such widespread harm. In closing, I urge you to make the right choice by relocating the proposed pipeline to a more suitable location that will safeguard our natural wilderness, protect our wildlife, and uphold our commitment to outdoor recreation. The future of our region depends on this decision, and it is our responsibility to leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for generations to come. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

**Comment 57:**

I am a retired environmental regulator that frequently hikes, bird watches and fishes much of northcentral Pennsylvania. I, and many others, strongly believe in our rights as preserved in Article I, Section 27 of the constitution

of this great Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania General Energy Company (PGE) has proposed a gas and water pipeline route called the Okome Area pipeline (Permit application# E-4129223-006). The development of this pipeline corridor will have direct and long-term aesthetic and environmental impacts to the beautiful, cherished Mid-State Trail, diminishing the wilderness-like experience enjoyed by hikers. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route crosses several headwater streams, at least one of which is exceptional value, posing water pollution risks both during construction activities and pipeline maintenance. The clearing of forests and introduction of heavy equipment causes forest fragmentation, and can facilitate the spread of invasive species, threatening biodiversity and damaging the forest ecosystem for many decades. Pipeline construction and the invasive species it brings can impede hiking and other pursuits, and it usually brings invasive Japanese Barberry and other invasive species that further damage the forest landscape and serve as habitat for small mammals that harbor ticks carrying Lyme and other diseases. The tires of heavy equipment can easily trap and disperse the seeds of barberry and other problematic plant species. In short, a pipeline will diminish the trail and the forest environment that surrounds it, destroying the peaceful quality of the forest, its biodiversity, potentially causing soil erosion and sedimentation of headwater streams, all of which is contrary to the rights bestowed on all of us through the environmental rights amendment. I support the alternative presented recently by several groups, including Trout Unlimited and the Keystone Trails Association. I am familiar with the alternatives evaluated by PGE, and find their logic and statements both laughable and shockingly absurd. I believe DEP must provide the public an open and convenient public hearing so that all those potentially impacted by this proposed pipeline can be heard. Alternately, DEP can reject the permit application immediately and advise PGE their proposal violates the environmental rights amendment.

**Comment 58:**

I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to the proposed Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification for three new PA General Energy shale natural gas and water pipelines in Cummings and McHenry Townships, Lycoming County. As you know, the proposed project would cross nine streams and one wetland, all categorized as exceptional value or high-quality, among the cleanest in the Commonwealth. In addition to being valued for their ecology, these waterways are prized by anglers and outdoor lovers as wild trout streams. As a result, I remain deeply concerned about the environmental health impacts of open-cut crossings of these streams (and the destruction of forests and riparian buffers) by three pipelines within a 30-foot wide, 3.7-mile long permanent right-of-way.

Pennsylvania's most recent Integrated Water Quality and Monitoring Report found that one-third of the Commonwealth's streams – 27,886 miles – have impaired water quality. That's an increase from the 2020 report which found 25,468 miles of water quality impaired streams making them unsafe for aquatic life, recreation, fish consumption, or water supply. Given that Lycoming County ranked 42 of 67 in terms of impairment, with only about 15 percent of its total streams and waterways impaired, that is all the more reason to safeguard these waterways as ecological and out recreational treasures.

Lastly, I understand from my friends at the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited that an alternative route potentially offers a much more environmentally safe and friendly approach. Locating the pipelines on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road would avoid multiple Wild Trout Stream Crossings and a Wetlands Crossing as well as potentially degrading the wild, primitive aesthetic character of the Mid State Trail and Bark Cabin Natural Area and cutting a permanent swath through over three miles of contiguous forest. The alternative route on the roads would be in areas already disturbed, which could improve the township roads and connect to existing gas infrastructure on Schoolhouse Road. If located along the roads, the gas and water lines would be more readily monitored for problems, maintenance, and erosion/sedimentation issues. As Minority Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, I fully understand our continued reliance on fossil fuels, natural gas, and the pipeline infrastructure that they require. However, as we work to transition from emissions to a clean energy economy, we must also strive to mitigate and reduce the impacts of the growing network of pipelines on our environmental health and our public health. In addition, although such pipeline projects are often touted for their economic benefits, I'd also note that outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania is a multi-billion dollar industry, adding \$14 billion to our gross domestic product and producing 150,000 jobs in 2021. With those points in mind, as well as our

Constitutional duty under Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution to protect and uphold the people's "right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment," I respectfully request that you deny these permits in favor of better and less intrusive alternatives. Thank you for making this information available to the public. I appreciate your consideration of my comments.

**Comment 59:**

I am extremely concerned that the proposed pipeline in the Little Pine watershed will have a significant, adverse impact on this gem of a trout stream. I have fished this stream and nearby tributaries and believe that the path proposed by PGE will degrade the watershed, fisheries and woodlands. I believe the alternative path proposed by a number of wilderness trail associations and the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited would be a much better alternative. I believe that pipelines ARE a highly efficient method of safely transporting diverse materials and avoiding heavy truck traffic on highways. HOWEVER, I believe that vulnerable natural resources must be considered carefully when choosing the paths of these pipelines. Please do NOT approve Permit E-4129223-006 as proposed. Choose the alternative route!

**Comment 60:**

I am in opposition to the proposed pipeline route. The company will cut crossings across nine high quality cold water trout streams and will have a negative impact on the area.

**Comment 61:**

As the chair of the Pine Creek Watershed Council (PCWC), I am writing to express concerns related to the Proposed Chapter 105 permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification for three new PA General Energy (PGE) shale natural gas and water pipelines in Cummings and McHenry Townships, Lycoming County as appeared in the October 7, 2023 Pennsylvania Bulletin. PCWC is a non-profit environmental organization that formed after the Development of the Pine Creek Watershed River Conservation Plan supported by DCNR we have been implementing the plan since 2005. Our members include county planning departments, conservation districts and members of other conservation organizations within the watershed. The pipeline route that PGE applied for would directly impact a pristine forested area in the western portion of the Otter Run watershed by clearing forested areas and constructing nine open cut crossings of high quality wild trout streams. Taken from a landscape scale perspective it looks like they chose a route that would have the most damage to aquatic and terrestrial habitats in the vicinity. This seems excessive when a viable alternate route is available. Locating the pipelines on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road would avoid multiple crossings of wild trout streams and a wetlands crossing, as well as not degrade the wild, primitive aesthetic character of the Mid State Trail and Bark Cabin Natural Area corridor by cutting a permanent swath through over three miles of contiguous forest. The alternative route on the roads would be in areas already disturbed, could reduce storm water runoff, could improve the township roads, and connect to existing gas infrastructure on Schoolhouse Hollow Road. We respectfully request that the proposed route would not be approved and that a hearing be held to provide for public input from stakeholders, and obtain more information concerning why an alternate route with less significant environmental impact to water and forest resources should not be pursued. Thank you for considering our concern regarding this important issue.

**Comment 62:**

On behalf of the Keystone Trails Association (KTA), I am writing to express our concerns about a proposed pipeline that would degrade the Mid State Trail – the state's longest hiking trail and one of its finest. The development of a pipeline corridor will have direct and long-term aesthetic impacts to the trail, diminishing the wilderness-like experience enjoyed by hikers. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route crosses several headwater streams posing water pollution risks especially during construction activities or pipeline maintenance. The clearing of forests and introduction of heavy equipment can facilitate the spread of invasive species, threatening biodiversity and, in some

cases, impeding hiking and other pursuits. For example, invasive Japanese barberry has sharp thorns that can injure hikers. The plant is also a reservoir for small mammals that harbor ticks carrying Lyme and other diseases. The tires of heavy equipment can easily trap and disperse the seeds of barberry and other problematic plant species. In short, a pipeline will diminish the trail and the environment that surrounds it. KTA has championed Pennsylvania trails since 1956. Our mission is to promote, provide, protect, and preserve hiking trails and hiking opportunities in the Commonwealth. We well understand the benefits they bestow to people and communities. Trails, and the land that surrounds them, are important amenities that require and deserve careful stewardship if they are to retain the suite of economic, environmental, and health-related services they afford. Natural gas development activities in Pennsylvania have a history of disrupting hiking trails, accelerating climate change, and harming natural resources. The Mid State Trail would best be served by a diminishment of this activity, but, in the short term, there is a simple solution to avoiding the worst impacts of this pipeline to the trail. An alternate route proposed by Trout Unlimited would site the pipeline on Silver Springs Road, Truman Run Road, and Schoolhouse Road. The wild character of the Mid State Trail would be preserved, and more contiguous forest left intact. Wild trout stream crossings and wetland incursions would be avoided altogether. The alternate route uses areas already disturbed and affords PGE and others better access for monitoring and emergency response. Outdoor recreation is a booming Pennsylvania industry, contributing more to the state's economy than natural gas development. The concerns of trail users and conservationists merit full consideration as do their ideas for ameliorating negative environmental and experiential impacts. KTA hereby requests DEP to hold a public meeting on this matter to maximize public input, and, at a minimum, asks the agency to fully consider the alternate pipeline route that has been proposed and mapped by Trout Unlimited. Thank you for considering our perspective and those of our allied organizations. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

#### **Comment 63:**

I was scheduled to provide oral testimony at the July 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing on this PGE permit but was unable to attend due to an unexpected family matter. I want to thank DEP's Megan Lehman for sending me the transcript of that hearing. I have communicated with Megan in the past, and always find her to be a dedicated professional who obviously takes her title of "communications manager" seriously. I am grateful. I am 75 years old and have been active in environmental protection issues for over 5 decades. I have a bachelor's degree in special education and a master's in early childhood ed. I was teaching in an elementary school near Indiana, PA on the first Earth Day in April of 1970. I can still remember how excited we were that Senator Nelson's objective with that day of celebration would make a permanent change to, as Nelson declared, "get a nationwide demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake the political establishment out of its lethargy and, finally, force this issue permanently onto the national political agenda." When the EPA was established 3 months later, there was yet another cause for celebration among those who love and desire to protect natural habitats. Here we are, 54 years later, and I have amassed a thick folder of written and oral testimony and comments I have provided to government regulatory agencies. The majority of those have been presented to DEP.

In each case, my underlying message has been the same:

- follow the law, (A#1/S#27 of the PA Constitution – which you are no doubt always expecting to and probably weary of hearing quoted)...
- act on behalf of the people...
- hold the industry/corporation accountable...
- fulfill your mission...

What else can be said? What other testimony is available for me to deliver? What message is more urgent to me and my fellow citizens of this state who are paying attention to the overwhelming and ongoing degradation of the environment? None. None. None. The permit now in question has been submitted by PGE, a company with a truly deplorable track record of violations when it comes to degrading the waters and EV streams of this Commonwealth. PGE began to accumulate violations in PA streams 2012 in the high-quality Pine Creek watershed with two brine spills

and one diesel fuel spill. The total volume of brine spilled was estimated at 8,200 gallons; the diesel fuel spill was estimated at 89 gallons. DEP issued multiple notices of violation to PGE at that time, including violations of the Oil and Gas Act, Solid Waste Management Act, and Clean Streams Law. When the company moved to the Loyalsock watershed a decade later, PGE racked up 12 violations of the Clean Streams Act with the construction of a water withdrawal and equipment that subsequently needed to be re-permitted after installation because of a blatant violation of the original permit.



<https://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2022/10/dep-pa-general-energy-cited-for-more.html>

[https://www.bayjournal.com/news/energy/hellbender-habitat-slammed-by-pollution-in-pennsylvanias-loyalsock-creek/article\\_6274b230-74f1-11ed-b3cc-17cc6251b680.html](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/energy/hellbender-habitat-slammed-by-pollution-in-pennsylvanias-loyalsock-creek/article_6274b230-74f1-11ed-b3cc-17cc6251b680.html)

In 2022, by your agency's own admission, DEP declared 33% of all Pennsylvania waterways to be considered polluted enough to harm wildlife, recreation or drinking water. Two years later, here you are, considering and no doubt poised to grant a permit to PGE that will bring further harm to multiple streams in PA where brook trout are already under threat by a warming climate. I submit that PGE's permit request is in direct violation to DEP's mission "to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment while fostering sustainable and equitable practices." Granting this pipeline permit as requested by PGE does NOTHING to "protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment." One look at PGE's past behavior in high quality and EV streams is proof that the company's ability to employ "sustainable" practices stands at zero. If PGE was an individual in court before any judge in this Commonwealth, and the violations the company has racked up were criminal acts or DUIs, PGE would absolutely be considered a serial offender of the laws of this state. PGE would have reached the repeat offender level that requires a license suspension and jail time.

Obviously, that is a metaphor and not a request. What I am requesting is that past behavior be considered when new permits are requested. I am asking that new permit requests no longer be considered on a proverbial clean slate. PGE is a proven habitual offender. As such, the company has not earned the right to further degrade the forests and waters of this state. Methane extraction and transmission via pipelines is heavy industry – loud, dusty, and dirty. It is incongruent with the thick forests, sensitive habitats, hushed solitude, and star-drenched skies one expects to experience in many wilderness pursuits. Threats to air, water, and wildlife are manifest. Landscape fragmentation and forest loss are collateral damage. Ecological impacts, while sometimes immediate, are often insidious as they slowly degrade environmental health over time. I have lived long enough to know what “over time” looks like when it comes to environmental degradation. I encourage you to step up, fulfill your mission, and truly begin to make decisions that protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment. What better place to start than by denying this PGE permit? Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

**Comment 64:**

I am strongly against the proposed route of the PGE Phase IV Pipeline in the Okome area of Lycoming County PA. My objections to the proposed pipeline are grounded in two areas: the pipeline's significant and destructive impact to the surrounding forest and the pipeline's degradation of the Mid-State Trail (MST) corridor. Under the current proposal of the pipeline by PGE, the route would cut crossings in nine high-quality trout streams and one wetland. This pipeline would severely degrade the quality of these streams through increased erosion and sedimentation. The route of the 3.7 mile pipeline would raze forests that protect these delicate stream ecosystems and it would increase the detrimental impacts of forest fragmentation. Additionally, the proposed pipeline route borders the Bark Cabin Natural Area of old-growth forest and this would severely impact this highly important ecological area through increased, and undesirable forest edge effect. The pipeline route would also negatively impact the MST corridor by decimating the existing trail and deteriorating the aesthetic value of the trail. I and countless other Pennsylvanians turn to public forests to benefit physical and mental health but equally to find solitude, reflection and communion with nature. Public forests belong to the citizens of Pennsylvania and they allow one to get away from the burdens and influence of everyday life. Yet it is disheartening to see that one of the most remote and isolated sections of the MST will become a sacrifice to ever encroaching industrialization from the gas industry. According to their website, “The Department of Environmental Protection's mission is to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water from pollution and to provide for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment.” Approving the PGE Phase IV pipeline is appallingly contrary to every element of the DEP's mission statement. This pipeline route would severely pollute and degrade the nine high quality trout streams it crosses, fundamentally alter the land and eliminate the scenic beauty that so many Pennsylvanians seek to improve their mental and physical health. DEP should uphold their mission statement and deny this pipeline.

**Comment 65:**

I am responding to the Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline in Lycoming County. My family has been visiting this area for over 30 years. Along with fishing the Ott Fork and other areas, there are fairs, biking and many things to do aside from spectacular scenery in this area that is easily accessible for many PA residents. New York state does not allow drilling and I would hate to see Pennsylvania, the state I grew up in being taken advantage of. It is sad to know that areas of Alaska are still like a dead zone after the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989. We need to consider the impacts of a proposed pipeline and try to limit the effects made on the environment. After reading the article on the proposed pipeline, I strongly recommend that an agreement be reached for an alternate route with fewer impacts on wild trout streams and the wetland area.

**Comment 66:**

My name is Edward Lawrence, E-D-W-A-R-D L-A-W-R-E-N-C-E. And I'm the volunteer president of the Mid State Trail association. The primary mission of the Mid State Trail Association is to protect the integrity of the experience for the recreational users of Pennsylvania's longest and wildest hiking trail. So I'm here today to voice our opposition to the proposed PGE pipeline route which would adversely impact the trail. So thank you for allowing me three minutes.

The poet William Blake wrote that prudence travels a straight road, but it is the crooked path that leads to inspiration. Unlike a pipeline, a hiking trail is not about getting from point A to point B in the most cost-effective way. For hikers it is about the chance sighting of the ephemeral beauty of a pink lady's slipper, of hearing the distant drumming of a pileated woodpecker, of navigating the menace of a patch of stinging nettles, of seeing the wild cherry pits embedded in a pile of bear scat and the tranquility of breathing in the cool fragrance of the shade thrown by a stand of evergreens.

Users are participants in an immersive encounter with the natural magic that our public lands can provide. I understand that the proposed group can be seen as a prudent way for PG&E because theirs is an economic bottom line. These experiences along the Mid State Trail may not have a monetary value, but they do have an intrinsic worth which benefits our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being. Our bottom line at the Mid State Trail Association consists of defending the trail corridor against the industrial encroachment which would seriously degrade this remote section of the trail. I understand, based on what Nathan said, that they have taken into consideration some things to ameliorate the harm that would come to the trail. But we still hope that the trail can be moved away from the Mid State Trail, that their pipeline can be moved away. Thank you.

**Comment 67:**

Okay. Brian Wagner, B-R-I-A-N W-A-G-N-E-R. Okay. I'm the Conservation Committee Chair for the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, otherwise known as PATU. The mission of PATU is to conserve, protect, restore and sustain Pennsylvania's cold water fisheries and their watersheds, especially our wild trout resources. PATU's primary concern with the project is the nine open cut crossings of wild trout streams, including Hackett Fork, which is designated exceptional value. The others are designated high quality cold water fisheries. And there's one exceptional value wetland.

Again, some of our concerns are that the proposed route would decrease the riparian zone, increased storm runoff and increased forest fragmentation, which are all known stressors to our native brook trout. An increased risk of erosion and sedimentation could result in reduced aquatic insects, the filling in of spawning areas, and increased risk to thermal stress. We're asking to consider an alternative route with less permanent surface disturbance. I do have several questions. Was there a revised alternatives analysis done and is a copy available? If the current proposed route is approved, can you confirm that it will eliminate the need for any compressor stations? And also if the current route is approved, we are recommending absolute minimal surface and forest disturbances and extreme care in the stream crossings. And I would ask, you know, who will be providing oversight on that. My final comment is that for any future projects, it would be helpful and appreciated if the local stakeholders were brought into the process earlier. That would be great. Thank you. Thank you for having the hearing.

**Comment 68:**

My name is Steve Martin and that is spelled S-T-E-V-E M-A-R-T-I-N. And I am the President of the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited, which is based in Williamsport. And we are one of numerous local Trout Unlimited chapters in the state of PA. We have roughly 300 members at this point. And all of those local chapters roll up into the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited. Much of what I have to say tonight is a bit duplicative in regards to what Brian Wagner has already expressed. Trout Unlimited is not a fishing organization or a fishing club. We're a conservation organization. And we are all about, you know, cold water fisheries, cold water habitats, conserving, protecting, and enhancing cold water habitats, as well as all the fish, aquatic life, and other life forms that call them home.

And at Trout Unlimited, we believe that, you know, in any given watershed, the downstream water quality begins at the headwaters. You know, and this is precisely the location of the proposed route of the natural gas and water pipelines that we're discussing tonight for Cummings and McHenry Townships. Our concerns are pretty much exactly the same as with the State Council that Brian already expressed. And, you know, those concerns are primarily the number of proposed open-cut crossings of multiple wild trout streams, as well as multiple wetlands. Some of those designated exceptional value, others high quality cold water fisheries. And as Brian said, you know, we believe that the proposed route will increase – well, we don't believe. We know it will increase forest fragmentation in a largely

undisturbed area. And this is going to decrease the riparian zone. And, you know, as Brian said, some of the other implications could be storm water runoff, erosion, sedimentation, possible increased sun lighting, which could affect the water temperatures. And, you know, these and other stressors could have an impact on the native brook trout population and the aquatic life that also lives in those streams.

We believe that there's a better alternate route that could be used. We believe that some of the road infrastructure already in place along Silver Springs and Truman Run Road makes sense. We're certainly not experts in laying out pipelines, but on the surface, there seems as though there's got to be a better route. So, you know, an alternate route could alleviate not only some of our concerns, but it could add additional benefits to PG&E. You know, it could lead to more efficient monitoring of the pipelines, maintenance of the pipelines. But regardless, you know, we believe that all construction needs to be held to the highest industry standards. It needs to be required to utilize current industry best practices. And, as Brian said, require absolute minimal surface disturbance. So with that - Yep. Nope, I'm done. With that, I just thank you and for the opportunity to present our concerns this evening.

**Comment 69:**

Okay. Wonderful. All right. My name is Grace DeLallo, G-R-A-C-E D-E-L-A-L-L-O. Hello, my name is Grace DeLallo. And I'm a community organizer with Protect PT, a non-profit dedicated to ensuring residents safety, security, and quality of life. And was designed to protect our communities from harmful environmental impacts of fossil fuel activity, principles we still operate on today. I would like to start by thanking the department for its service to our Commonwealth and for the opportunity to testify here today. I'm here on behalf of myself, my community, and my State to urge you to not allow another space publicly enjoyed to be poisoned in the pursuit of private energy construction. If we are to meet our country and state's vital climate goals, the DEP must not allow this permit to pass. Since beginning my position at Protect PT, I've learned so much regarding the harmful effects that natural gas development has imposed on its citizens without our consent. Just today, Protect PT received a call to our office from someone who complained that an established local oil and gas operation had destroyed wetlands on their parents property. This is the second time we've received word of the specific operator destroying wetlands. And without any follow up or remediation efforts. Existing infrastructure is already destroying precious wetlands. So why endanger these habitats even further with unnecessary operations? The waters of the Commonwealth should not be sacrificed for the interest of private industry, particularly since the DEP is the trustee of these natural resources and high value trout streams. And according to the EPA, many species of birds and mammals rely on wetlands for food, water, shelter, especially during migration and breeding. Wetlands, microbes, plants and wildlife are part of the global water cycle. And scientists now know that atmospheric maintenance may be an additional function of wetlands. So as we experience unprecedented effects of climate change, we should aim to preserve these ecosystems in order to protect ourselves and our communities from irreparable damage, especially as freshwater resources continue to dwindle. This proposal comes as PA has experienced nearly 19 percent decline in our wetlands in the past decade and 65 percent overall. A Penn State survey has approximated that we have 404,000 acres of wetlands left, a stark contrast from the 1,127,000 that we started with. The DEP has stated that wetlands and their importance are now recognized for their many contributions to enhancing water quality, providing valuable wildlife habitat, and contributing to public safety and welfare. Natural gas development does not contribute to any of these qualities. In fact, it greatly reduces biodiversity and resiliency of natural spaces, putting safety and welfare on the line, all over something we don't need, though some may want it. And the DEP has also stated that it has expanded from its traditional regulatory role to one proactive involvement in watershed management programs. Its watershed approach is community based, locally driven, and specific to the needs of the local watershed. If this is true, then please show the community that you are prioritizing a proactive stance and will not allow further gas development in our precious watersheds. If you allow this permit to pass, you are not fulfilling your obligation to Pennsylvanians who rely on this body to protect the environment, the very thing that you're here to do. Thank you.

**Comment 70:**

All right. My name is Tom Pike, that's T-O-M P-I-K-E. I'm an environmental policy advocate with Protect PT, a nonprofit that seeks to defend Pennsylvanians rights to clean air and water under the Pennsylvania Constitution,



Article I, Section 27. Article I, Section 27 reads, the people have a right to clean air - clear air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all people, including generations yet to come. The DEP has an obligation to defend these rights. It has no obligation to protect the profits of private corporations. Approving a pipeline over wetlands and exceptional value streams violates Pennsylvania's fundamental rights explicitly granted to us by a supermajority of voters in 1971. If approved, this action would open the state up to the potential for costly legal liability. Deny this permit. Thank you for your time.