

The Northeast Supply Enhancement Project (NESE) – Bad Actors Behind the Project

The Northeast Supply Enhancement (“NESE”) Project is being proposed for the fourth time in three years. The project is backed by Williams Companies and its subsidiary, Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company (“Transco”). These fossil-fuel giants have a long history of environmental harm and safety concerns and are seeking to lock the region into continued reliance on climate-altering fossil fuels.

Who are Williams and Transco?

- Williams Companies is a fossil fuel conglomerate headquartered in Oklahoma. The company is one of the largest natural gas pipeline companies in the United States.
- Williams owns and operates the Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company (“Transco”), the largest continuous natural gas pipeline system in the United States. The system is a network of roughly 10,000 miles of pipeline which extends from South Texas to the New York City metropolitan area
- The company is ranked as number 348 on the Fortune 500 List

Williams/Transco - Financially Misleading

- In 2002, Williams was sued alleging that company officials did not properly disclose the failing company's true financial condition, and that officials' public statements belied the firm's plummeting fiscal picture. In 2007, the Williams Companies agreed to pay \$290 million.

Williams/Transco – History of Safety Concerns

- Over the past decade, Williams’ pipelines and pumping stations have experienced over ten explosions or fires. Many of these incidents resulted in human fatality and injury, release of methane into our atmosphere, and contamination of groundwater resources.
- Williams has faced five safety and risk violations from various federal agencies over the past five years, including a civil penalty for an incident in New York and New Jersey.
- In 2015, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration fined the company for failing to properly inspect transmission pipeline valves in New York and New Jersey.
- Williams has also received numerous fines from USEPA for the unsafe discharge of pollutants.
- Williams was also fined 2.4 million for 18 incidents that took place between 2006 and 2013, which included issues such as failing to monitor corrosion and waiting to repair pipeline infrastructure that showed problematic signs.

Williams/Transco - Repeated Attempts to Degrade and Destroy Our Environment

- On January 21, 2020, Williams/Transco submitted renewed applications for the NESE Project. This marks the companies’ fourth attempt to seek approval from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for the project.
- Williams/Transco have shown a pattern of abusing the regulatory system during these three years. Twice the company has withdrawn permit applications on the day a decision is due in order to avoid being denied.
- In June of 2019, when NJDEP did in fact deny the application citing numerous deficiencies and impermissible negative impacts to the environment, the company reapplied less than 10 days later.

TAKE ACTION!

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The Northeast Supply Enhancement Project (NESE) – Climate Impacts

A crucial reason to oppose Williams/Transco’s proposed Northeast Supply Enhancement Project or “NESE” is the impact it will have on accelerating climate change. Despite numerous reports showing that the project is completely unnecessary, Williams/Transco is pushing a massive new fossil fuel pipeline and gas compressor station to lock New York City into decades of continued dependence on climate-altering fossil fuels.

What is Being Proposed?

The construction of: (1) a massive new gas-fired compressor station in Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ, and (2) a 23.4-mile fossil fuel pipeline that will rip through New Jersey, Raritan Bay, and Lower New York Bay to bring fracked-methane gas from Pennsylvania, through New Jersey to New York City and Long Island, NY.

What are the Climate Impacts?

If approved, the NESE Project will bring 400,000 dekatherms of methane to New York City, Brooklyn and Long Island every day. This will significantly increase the region’s carbon footprint by adding millions of metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

What is this the equivalent to?

- (1) Adding 7,724,860 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere every year!
- (2) Putting 1,639,945 new cars on the road every year!
- (3) Burning 17,884,635 barrels of oil every year!

The Project is Against the Region’s Clean Energy and Climate Goals:

New York State Goals

- 85% ↓ in GHG Emissions by 2050
- 100% Carbon-Free Electricity by 2040
- Double Solar Energy by 2040

New Jersey Goals

- 85% ↓ in GHG Emissions by 2050
- 100% Clean Energy by 2050
- 7.5 GW of Offshore Wind by 2035

New York City Goals

- End All Fossil Fuel Use by 2040
- No New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure
- Double Solar Power

Independent Studies Show the Project is Not Needed!

- Despite claims by Williams/Transco that the project is needed to provide heat for the New York City region, the company has offered no proof of this statement.
- Numerous independent reports show that methane gas demand in the New York City area is declining, and can be expected to continue to decline in order to meet state and local clean energy goals.
- National Grid, the company contracted to purchase the gas from the project claimed the project was required to meet demand and instituted a moratorium on all new natural gas hook-ups unless the project was approved. The company failed to justify this claim and were fined over \$35 million dollars and ordered to end the unnecessary and unlawful moratorium.

Bait and Switch – Potential LNG Terminal

- Given the documented lack of need for the project and clear projections that methane gas and fossil fuel demand will decrease in the region, there is a very real possibility that Williams/Transco is actually attempting to create a future offshore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export facility.
- This pipeline could jump-start a new LNG export operation which will drastically increase fracking in Pennsylvania and greenhouse gas emissions globally.
- There have been several attempts in the last decade to create offshore LNG terminals along the proposed NESE pipeline route.

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The Northeast Supply Enhancement (“NESE”) Project – Impacts from the Resuspension of Toxic Sediment

Williams/Transco is proposing to build a massive new fossil fuel expansion project called the Northeast Supply Enhancement (“NESE”) Project. If approved the project will result in widespread significant environmental harm. The project also poses risks to public health and safety from the resuspension of toxic sediment.

What is Being Proposed?

- The construction of: (1) a massive new gas-fired compressor station in Franklin Township, Somerset County, and (2) a 23.4 mile fossil fuel pipeline that will rip through New Jersey, Raritan Bay, and Lower New York Bay to bring fracked-methane gas from Pennsylvania, through New Jersey to New York City and Long Island, NY.

Overall Resuspension:

- The construction and installation of the offshore pipeline involves dredging a trench through Raritan Bay, Lower New York Bay and the ocean. As the nation’s oldest industrial waterway, for decades Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay were subject to widespread contamination. While we have seen dramatic improvements in the water quality of the area in recent years, the toxic legacy remains buried in the sediment of these waterbodies. Dredging the channel for the proposed pipeline will resuspend over 1,000,000 tons of toxic-laden sediment.
- This sediment is contaminated with toxins such as PCBs, dioxin, lead, and arsenic. The disruption of the seabed will re-suspend these toxins, damaging the marine environment and affecting the populated shorelines.
- Approximately 83% of soil samples from Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay exceed New York and New Jersey water quality standards. In fact, 33% of samples had excessive amounts of toxic organic pollution.
- Resuspending the toxic sediment will destroy water quality, impacting the marine ecosystem and human health.

Harm to Marine Life:

- The release of these toxins will be detrimental for benthic species and the entirety of the marine ecosystem. Long term consequences of these toxins have not been adequately studied. By the applicant’s most conservative estimate, the impacts from the resuspension will take up to three years to subside.
- Increased turbidity from dredging a 23.4-mile trench will result in 1,090,000 tons of sediment to be released. This will make it increasingly difficult for sea creatures to navigate and hunt.
- Horseshoe crabs in the area may be killed or injured due to excavation activities.

Re-suspension and Harm to Human Health:

- The suspension of arsenic could lead to cancer and other developmental and neurological diseases.
- The re-suspension of the toxic contaminants will reintroduce these harmful pollutants into the food chain, risking human ingestion.
- Organic toxins, called dioxins, will be suspended in this project. Dioxins are highly toxic and bond to body fat, making humans and animal highly susceptible to contamination.

Disrupting a Superfund Site:

- The NESE pipeline will impact the Raritan Bay Slag Superfund Site. This is a highly-contaminated area containing lead, arsenic, antimony, copper, and magnesium. Williams/Transco has not adequately prepared to avoid further contaminating or disrupting this Superfund site.

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The Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project – Impacts to Wildlife and the Economies of the Bayshore

After years of mismanagement, Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay have seen significant improvements in water quality. The area is now home to not only numerous species of wildlife but has also become a center for a wide variety of economic and recreational activities. The NESE project and the construction of a 23.4-mile pipeline that would rip through these ecosystems will harm marine life and the businesses which depend on clean waters.

Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay – Finally Flourishing

- As the nation’s oldest industrial waterway, Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay were subject to widespread contamination for decades. However, since the 1970s, coastal waters in Raritan Bay have made tremendous improvements in overall quality and safety.
- Collectively, the Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay now support more than 200 species of fish, many of which are economically important to the fishing industry. The area also serves as spawning ground for many important species.
- NESE threatens these improvements:
 - Toxins that have been buried underneath the surface will be disrupted during the construction.
 - The entirety of the marine ecosystem could be jeopardized by the re-suspension of toxins.

Vast Array of Marine Life in the Project Area:

- Benefitted by seasonal nutritional upwellings, Raritan Bay, Lower New York Bay, and surrounding waters host high volumes of algae, phytoplankton, and zooplankton, which in turn support a high variety of aquatic species, including the blue crab, ribbed mussel, shortnose sturgeon, bottlenose dolphin, and the harbor seal.
- Of the over 200 fish species found in the bay region, essential fish habitat is designated for 33 species in the area. Moreover, four fish species (Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, cusk, and oceanic whitetip shark), are federal or state-listed as threatened or endangered, and eight species (alewife, blueback herring, rainbow smelt, warsaw grouper, cusk, Atlantic bluefin tuna, dusky shark, and sand tiger shark) are listed as “species of concern” by the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Sixteen species of marine mammals, consisting of whales, dolphins, and seals, also use the Harbor and New York Bight during the year. This includes six species of whales that are critically endangered.
- In addition, five species of sea turtles, all federally designated as endangered, have been observed and documented within the NY/NJ Harbor and New York Bight.

NESE Threatens Marine Life:

- Marine mammals rely on echolocation, making them highly sensitive to noise. The NESE construction project requires the industrialization of the marine environment and will not only increase vessel activity but the use of heavy machinery which will operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The noise generated from these activities will harm and harass marine mammals for months, impacting navigation, and foraging.
- As a result of being denied numerous times before, William/Transco is trying to shorten the construction period which will intensify and concentrate the noise and industrial activities in the region. There has been no scientific assessment of the short and long-term impacts to marine mammals.
- None of NESE’s environmental reviews have fully accounted for the acoustic impacts to fish and sea turtles.

- The dredging of 23.4 miles of seafloor also poses a significant threat to marine life. While the water quality has improved, decades of mismanagement and abuse of the waters has resulted in sediments containing harmful chemicals. The dredging alone will re-suspend over 1,000,000 tons of contaminated sediments. The re-suspension of these toxins will have widespread and severe impacts to benthic species and the entirety of the marine ecosystem. Williams' most conservative estimate claims that the impacts to crustaceans will take up to three years to recuperate.
- The re-suspended sediment will also increase turbidity, making it hard for marine life to navigate and find food sources.

Importance of a Clean and Healthy Raritan Bay:

- Many New Jersey residents rely on the water quality of Raritan Bay and the surrounding ecosystems for their livelihood. Fishermen, boaters, whale-watching businesses, and recreational interests will be greatly impacted by the intrusion and construction of the NESE pipeline.
- The improvements in water quality has created a hub for recreational activity. In New York and New Jersey 41,078 acres of public waterfront spaces surround the project area. The area serves an important recreational function supporting public and private boating activities, such as rowing, kayaking, canoeing, and sailing.
- National Parks in NY and NJ surrounding the project area, including the Gateway National Recreation Area, recently received 16,090,450 visitors who spent \$559,169,600 in communities near the parks.
- Recreational fishing, whale watching, and scuba diving are also popular in the project area.

Failure to Assess Adverse Economic Impacts:

- There is no complete analysis of adverse economic impacts from NESE that will be the result of disturbances to the Raritan and Lower New York Bay.
- There is no comprehensive assessment of long-term effects from the re-suspension of toxic sediments.

Impacts to the Fishing and Shell Fishing Industries:

- The route of the pipeline cuts through seven fishing grounds used by both commercial and recreational fishermen. The re-suspension of toxins will negatively impact these fisheries. Once these toxins resettle, they will engulf fish eggs and larva, significantly harming future fish and shellfish populations.
- The strength and pressure testing of the pipeline requires sucking-up over 3.5 million gallons of water at an extremely fast rate (2,350 gallons per minute) through a mesh screen.
 - Fish eggs, larva, shellfish, and other sea creatures will be caught during the testing and killed from either the pressure, or entrapment within the pipeline.
 - Benthic and seafloor habitats will be disrupted due to the shallow depth of the bay, resulting in even more sediment disruption, increasing the amount of toxic chemicals re-suspended.
- Industrialization of the ecosystem: the construction methods will involve heavy machinery and increased vessel traffic, creating loud noises which are harmful to marine species.

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The Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project – Impacts to Air Quality

Williams/Transco is proposing to build a massive new fossil fuel expansion project called the Northeast Supply Enhancement (“NSEE”) Project. If approved, the project will result in widespread significant environmental harm, including serious impacts to air quality from emissions produced from a gas-fired compressor in NJ.

What is Being Proposed?

- The construction of: (1) a massive new gas-fired compressor station in Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ, and (2) a 23.4-mile fossil fuel pipeline that will rip through New Jersey, Raritan Bay, and Lower New York Bay to bring fracked-methane gas from Pennsylvania through New Jersey to New York City and Long Island, NJ.

Harmful Air Emissions from the Project:

A crucial component of the NESE Project is Compressor Station 206, a massive gas-fired compressor station that will emit harmful air pollutants.

Air Pollution from Compressor Station 206

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| (1) Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂): | 132,720 tons per year |
| (2) Carbon Monoxide (CO): | 57 tons per year |
| (3) Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM _{2.5}): | 18.9 tons per year |
| (4) Particulate Matter 10 (PM ₁₀): | 18.9 tons per year |
| (5) Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x): | 22.7 tons per year |
| (6) Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂): | 3.07 tons per year |
| (7) Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): | 9.5 tons per year |
| (8) Formaldehyde: | 0.35 tons per year |

- Many of these pollutants have significant impacts on human health. Exposure to these pollutants can increase the risk of respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological and developmental diseases. Examples of public health impacts include eye, nose, and throat irritation, difficulty breathing, worsening of asthma, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and headaches.
- The potential health impacts are not limited to those who live in the direct area surrounding the compressor station. There are also significant regional health threats. When nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds combine in the presence of sunlight, they form ground-level ozone, a regional pollutant. Ozone can cause respiratory problems, including worsening of asthma and other respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular effects, including cardiac arrhythmia, heart attacks, and stroke.
- People most at risk from breathing polluted air include people with asthma (or other respiratory diseases), children, older adults, and people who are active or work outdoors.

New Jersey Already Has Poor Air Quality:

- The emissions from Compressor Station 206 will add to New Jersey’s already failing air quality.
- The American Lung Association gave both Middlesex and Monmouth Counties an “F” for ozone pollution. New Jersey has never achieved the federal air quality standard for ground-level ozone.
- New Jersey recently joined a lawsuit against the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) seeking to improve air quality in the state by holding out-of-state power plants and polluters accountable for the impacts that drift into New Jersey. The lawsuit notes that downwind states are classified as serious in terms of persistent ozone pollution, including the New York-New Jersey region.

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The Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project – Pollution without Justification

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Williams Failed to Show Need for Project:

- Williams/Transco failed to justify the project is needed to meet growing energy needs in NYC and Long Island.
- Williams claims natural gas consumption will increase by 10% over the next decade; however, the company has refused to provide evidence to support this claim and has requested the data be kept from the public record.

False Demand:

- 350 Brooklyn produced an independent report that outlines that the project is not needed. The report utterly rejects Williams’ playbook of disinformation and holding energy needs hostage.
- NY Independent System Operator (the independent body in charge of tracking NY’s energy demand) and US Energy Information Administration both forecast a flat or decrease natural gas demand in the region.
- The report criticizes the underlying assumptions used by Williams to justify the unneeded pipeline. Williams maintains NESE is needed to meet a growing demand which will be jump-started by upcoming conversions from home heating oil to natural gas. The report shows that virtually all home heating oil customers have already converted years ago.

Williams Profits Regardless of the Demand for Natural Gas:

- Even if the project is unnecessary, Williams and Transco will profit. Federal regulations allow for Williams to receive 14% return on the equity of the project regardless of necessity.

Failed Extortion by National Grid:

- National Grid is the gas utility contracted to purchase the capacity from the NESE Project. After both the NY Department of Environmental Conservation and NJ Department of Environmental Protection rejected permits for the proposed project in June 2019, the company issued a moratorium on all new natural gas hook-ups until the project was approved. The company even went so far as to pressure its customers to lobby elected officials to get the project approved.
- New York regulators investigated whether the moratorium was necessary and found that there was no justification that National Grid could not meet demand unless the pipeline was approved. National Grid was fined 35 million dollars and forced to connect all new customers.

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