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Central Jersey Environmental Defenders

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Contacts:

Kari Martin or Cindy Zipf, Clean Ocean Action, 732-872-0111
Ida Sanoff, Natural Resources Protective Assn., 917-923-0360
Ed Potosnak, NJ League of Conservation Voters, 732-991-7574
Laura Shindell, NY Food & Water Watch, 203-522-2130
Jeff Tittel, New Jersey Sierra Club, 609-559-9100

Kin Gee, CHARGE, 732-807-6471
Eric Benson, Clean Water Action, 908-510-0196
Doug O'Malley, Environment New Jersey, 917-449-6812
JK Canepa, Sane Energy Project, 917-648-4514
Matt Gove, Surfrider Foundation, 952-250-4545

Attachments (2): Transco Request for Extension of Time; FERC Notice of Request for Extension of Time (attached)

PRESS RELEASE

**NO JOKE! "UN-'NESE'-SSARY" DIRTY METHANE GAS PROJECT BACK FOR 5th TIME
NJ/NY Groups Want FERC Not to Give Williams Transco More Time**

New Jersey & New York – After almost a year of inaction, the company seeking to build a massive methane gas compressor station and 23.4-mile methane gas pipeline called the Northeast Supply Enhancement Project (NESE) through New Jersey communities, Raritan Bay, Lower New York Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean from Sayreville, New Jersey to Rockaway, New York is drawing strong grassroots opposition once again. In a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Williams Transco “requests an additional two years, or until May 3, 2023, to complete the construction of the NESE Project and make it available for service.”

Citizens and advocacy groups are rallying to stop NESE, asking FERC for an extension to the 15-day comment period on Williams Transco’s request, and opposing the Extension of Time for many reasons. Further, the groups point-out that Williams Transco has applied five times and has never received a single approval.

“This ‘un-NESE-ssary’ climate-changing and polluting project is back for an unbelievable fifth time. NJ and NY Governors said ‘NO.’ Every Mayor along the entire Bayshore of Monmouth County, NJ said ‘No,’ and thousands of citizens said, ‘No.’ Nothing has changed about the project except it’s running out of time. We urge FERC to let the clock run-out on this most unhealthy, unneeded, and unwanted fossil fuel burning project,” said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action.**

According to Williams Transco’s letter to FERC on March 19, 2021, the company attributes their delay in requesting for more time to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the letter to FERC, Transco states, “Transco avers the COVID-19 pandemic is also having a direct and adverse impact on state and local areas resources and Transco’s development of the NESE Project.” Groups and advocates in New York and New Jersey strongly disagree.

“Life went on during COVID. People met and went to work virtually. Kids went to school virtually. People said goodbye to their loved ones virtually. The internet functioned, telephones functioned, and the world continued to turn,” said **Ida Sanoff, Executive Director, Natural Resources Protective Association.**

“This project goes against all our efforts to move toward a 21st century renewable energy future. It would keep natural gas infrastructure in operation for 30 years or more, making the region dependent on dirty fossil fuels and delaying the transition to renewable energy sources. It will also threaten water, wildlife, and the safety and health of our communities,” said **Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.** “It’s crucial that we let FERC know that we won’t stand for more unneeded dirty fossil fuel pipelines in New Jersey. FERC should acknowledge and respect New Jersey’s permit authority and deny the NESE permit extension request.”

“If Williams Transco is looking for another embarrassing defeat, they’ve turned to the right place. New York has made it crystal clear that the polluting Williams NESE fracked gas pipeline is not welcome here. The project was denied by state regulators three times already, due to the environmental hazards of fracked gas pipelines. Elected officials at every level of government and thousands of New Yorkers have united against the pipeline. FERC must follow our lead and reject Williams’ extension request,” said **Laura Shindell, New York Organizer for Food & Water Watch.**

“Williams’ bid for more time to drive a fracked gas pipeline through New Jersey’s towns, streams, and forests and into the coastal waters of New York Harbor is a cynical end-stage maneuver. The company is trying to grab as much profit as possible before the fossil fuel industry goes under for good. Recognizing the inevitable result of ground-breaking climate legislation, including New York’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and New Jersey’s Global Warming Response Act, and the economic death spiral of the extractive economy, Williams is making its desperate move. We hold FERC to its commitment to consider the potential climate consequences of every project submitted and urge the Commission to deny any extension of time for the ill-conceived, polluting, dangerous, expensive, and unnecessary NESE pipeline,” said **JK Canepa, Sane Energy Project, Rockaway Outreach Coordinator.**

“Both New Jersey and New York residents and governments have repeatedly weighed in on the Williams/NESE pipeline project over the last four years with a resounding NO. Just because Williams has unlimited lobbyist and attorney funds, doesn’t mean the public should be forced to face this dangerous project again,” said **Matt Gove, Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager, Surfrider Foundation.**

“Transco’s NESE project is back again. Kind of like Dracula, this is the fifth time they’ve come back. This would mean all of the air pollution and methane from the compressor station as well as the environmental impacts of the pipeline. It would cut through the already polluted and sensitive Raritan Bay and the New York Bay. An explosion or leak from their proposed compressor station could threaten communities and destroy important habitat while adding even more pollution,” said **Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “New York said no to NESE last year, and New Jersey followed. Now FERC needs to deny this project and tell NESE to get the FERC out of here.”

“Incredibly, like the Terminator, the Transco NESE Raritan Bay gas pipeline is back! Transco has repeatedly failed to demonstrate the need for the pipeline nor compliance with New Jersey’s Freshwater Wetland Protection Act. We urge FERC to deny this late request for an extension of time,” said **Kin Gee, President of CHARGE - Consumers Helping Affect Regulation of Gas & Electric.**

“It’s time to kill the NESE zombie pipeline once and for all. New Jersey and New York are moving towards a clean energy future, and the last thing we need FERC to do is issue an extension to a long-dead fossil fuel project that will leave our region stuck with dirty fracked gas infrastructure for decades,” said **Eric Benson, Clean Water Action, NJ Campaigns Director.**

"Why do we keep on making the same environmental mistakes? It costs far more to undo fossil fuel pollutants than to just not approve them in the first place," said **Carole Balmer, Former Holmdel Township Deputy Mayor & Committeewomen.**

"Our members have been fighting this unnecessary pipeline since 2018 and enough is enough. This project needs to be shut down once and for all," said **Jan Hanson, President, New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs.**

"There is no good reason for FERC to grant this extension for the NESE pipeline because it's still an environmental disaster. The only surprise is that Williams has not unexpectedly discovered humility or climate science. Instead, they plod on with their zombie application which doubles down on unneeded and dangerous fossil fuel infrastructure. Nothing has changed for NESE and this false attempt to extend the clock should be soundly rejected by a newly invigorated FERC," said **Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.**

"Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Every choice impacts relationship with other people, other communities, and all diverse forms of life. We affirm NJDEP's determination that there is no compelling need for another interconnected gas pipeline between New Jersey and New York. The process of discernment has been deliberate, thorough and conclusive. No further extension to the NESE permit is warranted," said **Charles Loflin, Acting Executive Director, UU FaithAction.**

"The NESE project would be so detrimental in terms of adding to greenhouse gas and cumulative pollution at a time when we need to be moving in the opposite direction," said **Linda Powell, Outreach Coordinator, Central Jersey Environmental Defenders.**

The deadline for comments on Transco's request for an extension of time from FERC is 5pm on **April 6, 2021.** Comments can be submitted using FERC's online submission system at ferconline.ferc.gov.

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