

**Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-New York
Riverkeeper
Scenic Hudson**

Contacts:

Hayley Carlock, Scenic Hudson, 845 891 3148; hcarlock@scenichudson.org

Cliff Weathers, Riverkeeper, 914 478 4501, Ext. 239, cweathers@riverkeeper.org

Iris Marie Bloom, Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-New York, 845 687 7810, protectingourwaters@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2016

Videotaped Statements Opposing Pilgrim Pipelines Project Submitted to State Agencies Reviewing Industrial Proposal

HUDSON VALLEY, N.Y.—Environmental and community groups opposing a proposal to build two 170-mile oil pipelines through the heart of the Hudson Valley are sending video comments of opposition from residents who attended an Oct. 1 public session hosted in the City of Newburgh. The formal comments will be provided to the two state agencies reviewing the proposed project, which would carry volatile Bakken crude oil from Albany, N.Y., to Linden, N.J., as the industrial pipelines cut through private and municipal lands in 31 towns, villages and cities in Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, Ulster, Orange and Rockland counties. The citizens who made the formal videotaped comments have joined a rising chorus of opposition to the unviable project. The event featured special guest speaker Michelle Barlund-Smith—who experienced a pipeline accident that devastated her Michigan community and Kalamazoo River and now is a national advocate.

The 20 residents who spoke on the record—eager to be videotaped to show the personal perspectives of the threats they see from the proposed project—were concerned enough to take time to be at the Saturday session held at the Newburgh Free Library. Among their numerous concerns were:

- the variety of petrochemicals that could be carried by the pipelines
- devastating explosions and leaks
- proximity of the proposed pipelines to many schools
- potential impacts to residents and visitors at the intensely busy Woodbury Commons Thruway exit
- proximity of Ramapo well fields that provide one-third of Rockland County’s drinking water
- long-term investment in fossil fuels that contribute to climate change and severe weather
- project not decreasing but rather adding to valley becoming an industrial petrochemical corridor
- impacted communities and the region not getting a single direct benefit from the unacceptable risks

(see attached quote sheet from select citizens who gave videotaped testimony; videotaped quotes at :

<http://bit.ly/pilgrimpipelinescomments>)

Woman who’s lived through pipeline accident offers warning and need to protect the Hudson

Ms. Barlund-Smith, who terms herself an “accidental activist” motivated to save other communities from the pain and loss she and her town experienced, offered a moving perspective. In 2010, the Canadian pipeline company Enbridge was responsible for a massive oil spill in Battle Creek, M.I., and the Kalamazoo River.

“Pipeline companies will tell you they use high-tech equipment to prevent spills and can detect and stop leaks within minutes. The truth is, it’s usually local people who detect the leak and sometimes not until hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil have already polluted drinking water supplies, forests and farmers’ fields,” said Ms. Barlund-Smith. “You can’t imagine the havoc that a pipeline can cause on a river. You’ve got almost 200 miles of the Hudson for boating, tourism and waterfront development. That can all be taken away in an instant. You must protect your precious river—stop the Pilgrim Pipelines.”

(more)

Page 2, Statements Opposing Pilgrim Pipelines Project Submitted to State Agencies

“The Pilgrim Pipelines pose an enormous threat to the invaluable natural resources of the Hudson Valley and to public health and safety,” said **Hayley Carlock, director of Environmental Advocacy at Scenic Hudson**. “Given the resources at stake and the design for the project, it cannot move forward. Our local communities have overwhelmingly stated loud and clear that they don’t want these pipelines, and the state should listen.”

“The state has now spelled out the damages that the ill-advised and unnecessary Pilgrim Pipelines project could cause,” said **Kate Hudson, director of Cross Watershed Initiatives at Riverkeeper**. “In a September 14 determination, NYS DEC and the Thruway Authority listed 20 different categories of significant adverse environmental impacts that could result from the project, from drinking water resources to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, from nine environmental justice communities to endangered species, from human health to inconsistency with the state’s renewable energy goals. In the next several weeks, we will have an important opportunity to have our own say—for the record. We urge local governments and concerned groups and individuals up and down the Hudson Valley to weigh in and submit their comments and concerns, as soon as the public comment period is officially opened.”

“We are determined to stop the Pilgrim Pipelines from ever being built, and will work with our 220 organizational partners to generate plenty of public comment. This event was just the beginning of a new phase of action,” said **Iris Marie Bloom, an organizer with the Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-New York (CAPPNY)**. “The proposed Pilgrim Pipelines would be nothing short of disastrous for the health and safety of New York and for our region's water, our precious groundwater as well as 257 surface waterways which would be put at risk.”

Big impacts with no benefits

Construction and operation of the pipelines—which would be the first oil pipelines of this scale to cross the Hudson Valley—would result in significant environmental impacts and health and safety risks to the communities through which it passes, with no discernable benefits to those communities. The proposal includes not only a 168-mile-long mainline, but 14 miles of lateral pipelines, four pump stations, 10 meter stations, seven temporary contractor/pipe yards, and numerous temporary and permanent access roads. The pipelines would require two crossings of the Hudson River, and would cross every major tributary to the Hudson between Albany and the New York-New Jersey border. It also would run across or adjacent to invaluable public parks and lands, including Sterling Forest and Harriman State Park.

Municipalities overwhelmingly reject project and use of eminent domain

In November 2015, Pilgrim applied for permission to locate a large portion of its proposed mainline within the Thruway right of way—and the DEC and Thruway Authority now are gearing up to perform an environmental review of the project. Roughly 40 miles of the proposed mainline and laterals in New York are located outside the right-of-way, passing through or near residences, businesses, public parks and farms. Pilgrim is seeking to use eminent domain if landowners won’t agree to construction of the lines, as well as access roads and other project infrastructure, on their property. Whether in or outside the Thruway right-of-way, concerns about an accident are high, especially given that Bakken crude oil is highly volatile and federal data show that pipelines actually spill more oil per ton-mile transported than rail or barge and can release far greater quantities of oil in a single incident. A spill or explosion would present significant risks to public health, including contamination of drinking water resources for millions of people. Based on these significant risks to public health and safety, 29 New York municipalities, a majority of which lie in the path of the pipelines, have already passed resolutions opposing the project.