

## **Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines – New York (CAPPNY)**

**For Immediate Release** February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

**Contact:** Iris Marie Bloom, **Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-NY** (CAPPNY) (845) 687-7810 (use mobile while traveling this week: 215-840-6489) protectingourwaters@gmail.com

### **New York State Faces New Phase of Proposed Pilgrim Pipelines Fight**

#### ***All Municipalities on Record Oppose Co-Lead Agency Role for NYSTA***

Fifteen towns, cities, villages and counties along the direct route of the proposed controversial Pilgrim crude oil and refined products pipelines explicitly oppose a “co-lead agency” role for the Thruway Authority in the upcoming environmental review, in a second wave of public resolutions and letters.

In late 2015, at least 29 Hudson Valley municipalities passed resolutions and wrote letters to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), opposing the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA)’s proposed role as “lead agency,” advocating that the DEC take the lead.

In response to that outpouring of opposition, on December 21<sup>st</sup> 2015, DEC proposed that it share co-lead agency status with NYSTA. Thus far, **the City of Kingston; the Towns of Athens, Catskill, Saugerties, New Paltz, Rosendale, Plattekill, Newburgh, Tuxedo, and Cornwall; the Villages of Harriman and Tuxedo Park; Albany County, Greene County, and Ulster County**, have all **objected to this co-lead agency proposal**. No municipality in New York State has given its consent to any lead role for NYSTA.

The Town of New Paltz, backed by a unanimous Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> vote, went further, formally requesting that the DEC Commissioner resolve this dispute over co-lead agency. Commissioner Seggos has not yet responded, but municipalities expect he will weigh their objections and designate DEC as the only qualified agency to spearhead the environmental review of this massive project.

"The DEC Commissioner has an opportunity to strengthen the confidence of local governments and the public in this environmental review by resolving this dispute and designating DEC as sole lead agency," **Rosendale Town Councilmember Jen Metzger** commented. "The DEC is the only logical choice, based on the criteria spelled out in the regulations. And, nearly every town and city that would be impacted by this project has pointedly rejected a lead agency role by the Thruway Authority."

Over 150 people attended two public forums organized by **Orange County Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines (Orange RAPP)** this January and February in the Town of Newburgh, which adopted a strongly-worded Resolution on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, objecting to the co-lead agency proposal.

#### ***Up Next: Scoping Process***

After Commissioner Seggos resolves the lead agency dispute, the scoping process -- the first stage of the state environmental review process (SEQR) -- begins. CAPPNY has urged that scoping include multiple public hearings in at least six (6) directly affected counties: Albany, Greene, Rensselaer, Ulster, Orange, and Rockland. **Scoping opens the process for the public – including any interested residents, not just those in the direct path of the proposed pipelines -- to submit comments** to frame the issues for Pilgrim’s required environmental impact statement to evaluate.

**Scoping comments identify impacts and threats** to waterways, air, public health, climate, economic well-being, and communities if Pilgrim’s dual oil pipelines are permitted or constructed. Critical issues to evaluate include: the threat to drinking water beyond the six counties through which Pilgrim would run;

the increased oil “bomb train” traffic into Albany; and the worsening climate impacts throughout New York State and beyond, including extreme weather, increased flooding, and other negative effects on public health and safety. The environmental review process, which forms the basis for agency approval or denial of required permits, must then evaluate these issues.

**Arielle Herman, a small business and property owner in Catskill, New York** (Greene County), commented: “Pilgrim plans to take over multiple parcels owned by the Town of Catskill, including the Town Highway Department, without ever having consulted the town. According to their maps they also plan to utilize many local roads as construction routes, including one that goes through the Village of Catskill, potentially blocking the entrance to our Village Fire Department. Pilgrim’s construction plans are clearly haphazard. Pilgrim would put our communities at immediate risk of infrastructure damage, diminished emergency response capabilities, and traffic accidents in addition to harming our local economies, water supply, and more.”

“It is essential that adequate time -- at the very least 60 days -- be provided for the communities to comment on the scope that the environmental review should take,” said **Sue Rosenberg of the Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-Saugerties, New York**. “There should be public hearings in each county and in each city that the pipelines would go through. Each community would be impacted in unique ways by these proposed pipelines: the waters they cross, the economic and cultural resources they could damage, the impact on public and private roads, and more. We’ll have to make our voices heard, because Pilgrim will certainly try to keep the scoping comment period narrow and short.”

Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings, LLC, seeks permits to build two adjacent pipelines which would traverse New York State into New Jersey for over 170 miles, mostly following the Thruway. One crude oil pipeline would run south from Albany, NY, to Linden, NJ, and a refined petroleum products line would run north from Linden, NJ, to Albany, NY. The President and Vice President of Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings are both former executives of Koch Industries, which the EPA fined \$30 million for 300 oil pipeline spills in 2000.

Pilgrim’s proposed pipelines project – to transport volatile fracked Bakken Shale oil south and flammable petroleum products north -- includes five lateral pipelines, four pump stations, 35 permanent roads, and scores of temporary roads. The cumulative impacts of this massive project require a broad environmental impact statement scope. Potentially affected communities are expressing an urgent need for enough time and a sufficient number of hearings for residents’ voices to be heard. The scope which guides the preparation of the environmental impact statement is important due to the enormous scale and varied short and long-term impacts from the proposed pipelines.

**For more information: [www.stoppilgrimpipeline.com](http://www.stoppilgrimpipeline.com)**

**Available for Interview: Jen Metzger, Rosendale Councilmember: [jentmetzger@gmail.com](mailto:jentmetzger@gmail.com) 845-489-0830**

**Sue Rosenberg, Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-NY (CAPPNY): [rosenberg.sue@gmail.com](mailto:rosenberg.sue@gmail.com) 914-466-0954**

**Sandra Kissam, Orange Residents Against Pilgrim Pipelines (RAPP): [sandraks@frontiernet.net](mailto:sandraks@frontiernet.net) 845-564-3018**

**Arielle Herman, CAPPNY Greene County: [cappgreeneulster@gmail.com](mailto:cappgreeneulster@gmail.com) 518-943-4000**

**Kate Hudson, Riverkeeper: [khudson@riverkeeper.org](mailto:khudson@riverkeeper.org) 914-388-5016**

###