

TOWN OF ESOPUS RESOLUTION
OPPOSING THE PILGRIM PIPELINE

WHEREAS, Pilgrim Pipeline Company is proposing to build a bi-directional pipeline through the Town of Esopus that would transport crude oil and refined petroleum products between Albany, New York and Linden, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the pipeline will carry oil from Bakken Shale region of North Dakota extracted through a process of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” which has been found to contaminate clean water resources, create toxic air emissions and radioactive waste, and release large quantities of methane gas into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, data collected by the Capline Pipeline in Louisiana, which tested crude from 85 locations worldwide, indicates that crude oil from Bakken Shale has a far higher vapor pressure than crude from dozens of other locations, making it much more likely to throw off combustible cases; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued a safety alert on January 2, 2014, to the general public, emergency first responders, and shippers and carriers regarding the particular flammability of Bakken crude oil; and

WHEREAS, the Pipeline will carry a large volume of Bakken crude oil through residential areas in the Town of Esopus, County of Ulster, which will place residents in harm’s way should an explosion or spill occur; and

WHEREAS, according to PHMSA, pipeline operators reported 1,880 crude oil spills nationwide between 2003 and 2013, or nearly one spill every other day, resulting in over 44 million gallons of oil being spilled; and **WHEREAS**, 80 percent of these spills were the result of corrosion, equipment failure, incorrect operation or material and weld failures; and

WHEREAS, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, PHMSA only has 135 inspectors to oversee 2.6 million miles of pipeline, and only a fifth of that pipeline system has been inspected by PHMSA or its state partners since 2006; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Esopus, Town Board is in opposition of the Pilgrim Pipeline going through the Town of Esopus.

Resolution offered by: Councilperson Diane McCord
Resolution seconded by: Councilperson Kyle Barnett

Councilperson Diane McCord	Aye
Councilperson Kyle Barnett	Aye
Councilperson Gloria VanVliet	Aye
Councilperson Wayne Freer	No
Supervisory John K. Coutant	No

Resolution adopted 3/2

All of the Councilpersons made a statement to validate their position on the vote.

Councilperson Diane McCord read a statement she had prepared. Approval of the Pilgrim Pipeline will not change the amount of oil being transported by rail or barge. It will only add to the amount. 25% of all the oil in the country (crude oil) is now going thru Albany, 500,000 million gallons a day. It is taken to New Jersey and shipped to St Johns to be refined. Recently 865,000 gallons of crude oil spilled in Yellowstone. This spill saturated the ground 30 feet down. The pipeline would cross the Wallkill and four aqueducts through the Catskills possibly contaminating NYC drinking water. There is no federal agency to regulate the pipeline. No permission has been given from the NYS thruway. No applications have been filed with DEC. We need to insure there is an environmental review. Bakken crude oil cannot be contained if spilled. When a spill did occur only 20% of it was recovered. The approval of the pipeline would only encourage the use of more fossil fuel. Bakken shale fields in North Dakota have massive methane burns. It is because of all of the reasons above Councilperson McCord voted opposing the pipeline.

Councilperson Kyle Barnett joined Councilperson McCord and supports the resolution to oppose the pipeline project. After investigation into what the project is proposed to provide, leads Councilperson Barnett to believe he can see no benefit to the community or other communities along the pipeline route. He cannot see any economic benefit to the community. The spills are dangerous. While trains spill less, the pipeline leaks are enormous and it is a much bigger environmental catastrophe. The cleanup is never enough to actually remedy the particular problem that occurs. Councilperson Barnett said it absolutely astounds him that the company knowing all of the opposition that is out there, has not sent a single knowledgeable person to any Town or County Meetings to give just cause why the pipeline project should be supported. Under the circumstances, and given the enormous danger this could have to our environment, waterways, and wetland environments that are in close proximity to the pipeline, Councilperson Barnett cannot think of a single reason why he could possibly support it and was proud to oppose the project as proposed.

Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said she agrees with Councilpersons McCord and Barnett. She feels we do not need to add a pipeline to the transportation we already have on the barges and rails. If we could eliminate the tankers and river traffic... but we are told it will not lessen the traffic or make a difference. She is concerned about people who are putting in the pipeline who have not come out to give us information and reasons why we should have the pipeline. Councilperson said that is why she is voting in opposition of the pipeline.

Councilperson Wayne Freer said his research and information differs from what he has heard so far. After looking at the proposal and working closely with emergency services throughout the County, there are a lot of problems with the rail. He has concerns with the railroad service that goes through our town. The age of the track of the bridge that goes over the Rondout carrying 50 – 60 rail trains per day has not been inspected in quite some time. It is unknown how many of the cars are carrying oil. The trains run through heavy residential areas. In Ulster

Park and West Park area where the tracks double, we have stacking of 5 trains in 1 place in our town. His second concern is the river. No one knows at the present time how much the pipeline will flow on a daily basis. No one seems to be able to get a clear number and everything is in the planning stages. Some of the containment that the pipeline uses, such as the shut off switches, or spill detection are far better and more up to speed than the 1963-1968 rail cars that are being used to transport the oil. Some of the cars do not have stem protection if they come off the wheels. A rail car can carry up to 330,000 gallons per car with 60 – 100 cars on a train. You have a heck of a lot of potential for a spill. It would be ideal if it did not come through our town at all on the rail, river or pipeline. But out of the three ways of transportation, he feels the pipeline is more containable than what we have going over the Rondout creek. Councilperson Freer sits on several committees and will continue to do research. If new data comes out he is willing to revisit his decision. However at the present time, out of the three means of transportation he feels the pipeline is the safest and voted not to oppose.

Supervisor Coutant has heard both pros and cons but he has weighed in on listening to the people of our town. He asked what would happen if there is a spill in the Hudson? All of the townspeople he talked to said they feel the pipeline appears to be the safer option down the road, and are looking for him to support the pipeline. He would like to see if the pipeline can cut down the amount of oil that will be transported down the river or by rail system. Supervisor Coutant does not feel we have enough information from the company relating to safety and is premature to say what could or will happen. The potential of 5000 people losing their drinking water from a spill in the Hudson is a huge concern of Supervisor Coutant. He voted not to oppose the pipeline but is willing to change his decision as we go forward if the data shows it is not a safer option and will be the first to petition for change.