

RESOLUTION 2016-94

*Borough of Metuchen
County of Middlesex
State of New Jersey*

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PILGRIM PIPELINE

WHEREAS, Pilgrim Pipeline Company (“Pilgrim”) is proposing to build a new bi-directional pipeline through the Borough of Metuchen that would transport crude oil and refined petroleum products between Albany, New York and Linden, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the pipeline will carry oil extracted from North Dakota’s Bakken shale through the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, an extreme method of oil and gas extraction that depletes and despoils clean water resources, creates toxic air emissions and radioactive waste, and contributes to the climate change crisis by releasing large quantities of methane gas into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, in February the *Wall Street Journal* compared oil from 86 locations around the world and found Bakken crude oil to be the most explosive.¹ Bringing this fuel into our community endangers our families, property, and environment; and

WHEREAS, the Pilgrim pipeline raises significant safety concerns for the Borough of Metuchen, as well as potential harm to municipal and county infrastructure, and likely negative impact upon future development in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Metuchen Council is concerned that heavy construction equipment will also be in close proximity to homes and foundations due to the constraints of available workspace. Temporary workspace usage will also severely impact the existing soil reducing water absorption and may increase future flooding possibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Metuchen Council is concerned about the hazard the project may create due to the nature and volume of the highly flammable oil flowing through the pipeline, and its proposed route, which crosses through residential neighborhoods. These communities will be in the “impact radius” should an explosion and or spill occur; and

WHEREAS, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration (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

¹ <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304834704579401353579548592>

WHEREAS, the potential for a pipeline explosion could harm hundreds of people, we express grave concerns about this project negatively affecting the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Council's responsibility is to provide a safe environment for its residents, and this pipeline raises serious safety concerns as described above; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project may result in a loss of tax revenue for the Borough of Metuchen based on right-of-way agreements with Pilgrim Pipeline and a decline in the property values of homes along and adjacent to the new pipeline and surrounding neighborhoods as a direct result of the project; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Legislature recognized the significance of the New Jersey Highlands region and afforded special protection to the region and its resources in 2004 with the passage of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. The Act created the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council and the Highlands Regional Master Plan to ensure resource based planning would be used in the Highlands to combat sprawl and the depletion of water quality and quantity as the region provides drinking water to 5.4 million state residents; and

WHEREAS, the federal government acknowledged the exceptional value of Highlands resources and the urgent need for their preservation in 2004 when Congress passed the Highlands Conservation Act which "recognize[s] the importance of the water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region, and the national significance of the Highlands region to the United States."; and

WHEREAS, many township residents depend on ground water and public community water systems for water supply, and septic systems for waste disposal and this project will impact groundwater quality and quantity and the septic fields of residents along and adjacent to the right of way; and

WHEREAS, the wise stewardship of our natural resources involves protection of the Borough of Metuchen water supplies and water and other natural resources for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, protection of the Borough of Metuchen's water supplies and resources is better accomplished by prevention of contamination and environmental degradation, rather than attempting to clean up contamination and restoring degraded environments after the fact.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Metuchen Borough Council of the Borough of Metuchen, in the County of Middlesex, the following recitals are incorporated as of April 18, 2016

1. The Council opposes the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline.

2. The Council calls for a moratorium on any and all planning, proposal, surveying, or construction of the Pilgrim pipeline through (Community Name).
3. Because this project will traverse and negatively impact numerous significant natural areas and the resources of the municipality and the Highlands region, the Council requests a full environmental review, including a Highlands Act review, be conducted by the DEP to assess the myriad environmental consequences of the project.
4. The Council seeks the cooperation of other similarly located and affected townships, asking that all nearby affected townships adopt a similar resolution.

5- The Council adopts, and call upon similarly situated municipalities to adopt a resolution authorizing each Township to join together to enter their appearance in any proceeding before the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, and any other regulatory authority, so that by their strength of numbers they may successfully oppose the Pilgrim Pipeline project and have the ability to cause the relocation or termination of the project so as to prevent environmental degradation and to protect the public health and safety.

6 – The Council directs the municipal clerk to forward copies of this resolution to the following:

1. NJ Governor Chris Christie
2. State Senator Peter J. Barnes, III
3. State Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin
4. State Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan
5. New Jersey Highlands Executive Director Margaret Nordstrom and Councilmembers
6. Food and Water Watch, 100 Bayard Street, Suite 310, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
7. The Sierra Club – New Jersey Chapter, 145 W. Hanover Street, Trenton NJ 08618
8. All Middlesex County Municipal Councils
9. Middlesex County Freeholders

COUNCILMEMBER	YES	NO	NV	AB	COUNCILMEMBER	YES	NO	NV	AB	
LEIBFRIED					MULDOON					
GRAYZEL					RASMUSSEN					
INSERRO					WALLACE					
MOTION					SECOND					
X – INDICATES VOTE					AB- ABSENT			NV- NOT VOTING		

R2016-94
April 16, 2016

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Borough Council of the Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County, New Jersey at a regular meeting held on April 18, 2016

Susan D. Jackson, RMC
Borough Clerk

ATTEST:

Susan D. Jackson, RMC
Borough Clerk

Peter Cammarano, Mayor