

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PILGRIM PIPELINE

WHEREAS, Pilgrim Pipeline Company is proposing to build a bi-directional pipeline through the Ravana-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School District (RCSCSD) 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 the 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 86 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 gases; 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 RCSCSD, which will place residents in harm’s way should an explosion or spill occur; and

WHEREAS, according to PHMSA, pipeline operators reported almost 1,900 crude oil spills nationwide between 2003 and 2013, or nearly one spill every other day, resulting in 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

WHEREAS, any rupture or compromise of the Pipeline, even without an explosion or fire, will require extraordinary cleanup efforts, could force residents from their homes, and place a large number of residents in close proximity to hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, most RCSCSD residents depend on ground water and public community water systems for potable water supplies, the integrity and safety of which may be jeopardized by the Pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the Pilgrim Pipeline is proposed to be laid in areas containing sensitive aquifers upon which residents depend for drinking water; and,

WHEREAS, the Pilgrim pipeline also threatens important surface water resources, including the Coeymans Creek; and,

WHEREAS, the Executive Committee and membership of the Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Teachers Association (RCSTA) finds that the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline potentially threatens the health, safety, and welfare of the community; could decrease the values of homes located along its route and in surrounding neighborhoods; and could negatively impact future development in the RCSCSD; and

WHEREAS, the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan calls for becoming less energy and fossil fuel intensive while strengthening the regional economy, expanding renewable energy generation exponentially across the Region, and improving the resilience of the energy delivery system; and

WHEREAS, construction of the Pilgrim Pipeline to support and expand markets for fossil fuels is directly contrary to these clean energy goals; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee and membership of the RCSTA:

1. Call upon the New York State Thruway Authority to reject use of its right-of-way for the purpose of transporting oil or gas by pipeline; and further calls upon the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to deny an exception to its Accommodation Plan for said purpose; and
2. Urge Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to oppose construction of the Pilgrim Pipeline in New York State; and
3. Direct the RCSTA Secretary to forward copies of this resolution to the NYS Thruway Authority Chairperson Joanie Mahoney, NYS DOT Commissioner Matthew J. Driscoll, U.S. PHMSA Administrator Marie Therese Dominguez, U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Representative Paul Tonko, Governor Andrew Cuomo, N.Y. Assembly Member Patricia Fahy, N.Y. Assembly Member Peter Lopez, N.Y. Senator Neil Breslin and Acting NYS DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos

Matthew J. Miller, President
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