

Town Board Resolution Urging New York State to Take Action to Ensure the Safety of Communities, People, Properties and the Environment concerning Oil Shipments and Storage

WHEREAS, the increased production and transportation of crude oil from the Bakken shale oil formation in North Dakota and heavy tar sands oil fields of Alberta, Canada and the possible use of Hudson Valley corridors to transport and store these products raise serious concerns about the threat of leakages, spills, fires and other types of catastrophes that can seriously harm communities like Saugerties through which the products are transported; and

WHEREAS, Bakken crude oil is more explosive and more corrosive than typical crude oils and the heavy, sinking oils from tar sands formations are thick and much more viscous than typical crude oils, making the protection of public safety and environmental health increasingly more problematic in the event of a spill or major catastrophe involving either of these products; and

WHEREAS, local and regional hazardous response teams are ill-equipped and unable to contain or control a rail derailment, pipeline break, barge wreck, or anchorage storage leak that might rupture the cargo and spread crude oil into the environment, posing major fire threats, and seriously threatening properties, homes and lives; and

WHEREAS, the potential damages occurring as a result of just one spill or major event involving rail, water or pipeline corridors or anchorage leaks can be so catastrophic as to irrevocably damage local neighborhoods, alter permanently and deleteriously water and estuarial resources, and otherwise damage the Town's good name and reputation as an economically vibrant growth community located along an important Northeast commercial corridor; and

WHEREAS, the CSX rail route through Saugerties includes several major crossings that might pose the danger of a train collision that could result in a rail car rupture and fire of immeasurable proportions, as well as at least eight private crossings where events have occurred in the past that have cost lives and major disruptions to rail transport through Saugerties; and

WHEREAS, a pipeline route proposed for the New York State Thruway corridor crosses several streams, highways and environmentally important resources in Saugerties and may necessitate the taking of private property in addition to the Thruway corridor in the event of a rupture or break, the potential for which appears to increase significantly given the rate of breaks and their catastrophic consequences as reported elsewhere in recent months in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the use of the Hudson River for anchorages for transport ships carrying Bakken shale oil or heavy tar sands or their products is an improper use of this important estuarial resource, and will tend to provide a dangerous storage system for tons of this

product on the river instead of the stated goal of a holding scenario pending their processing at Albany;

WHEREAS, the transport of crude oil, especially Bakken and heavy crudes, by rail, pipeline and/or marine vessel through our communities presents an immediate and significant risk for the people, environment and economy of our Town, and the anchorages plan, while not located in waters off Saugerties is an improper use of this important estuary for Saugerties because of the potential damages to heritage tourism, upon which Saugerties and the Saugerties Lighthouse depend for our economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, prior to the discovery of the Bakken shale oil and heavy tar sands, fuel oil and gasoline products have been transported by barge along the Hudson River past Saugerties consistent with commercial practices and without incident or damage to the environment for almost a hundred years;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board emphatically urges the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Thruway Authority to deny permission to Pilgrim Pipeline to use the Thruway corridor for a pipeline to convey these products, taking into consideration the impacts of a catastrophic crude oil spill on communities such as Saugerties and the wider ecosystem of the Hudson River estuary; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board urges the United States Coast Guard to deny permits for the anchorages or otherwise storage or holding of the Bakken shale oil and heavy tar sands and their products on the Hudson River, taking into consideration the impacts of a catastrophic spill on the economic vitality and essential resources of the Hudson River estuary and its communities, including Saugerties; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that rail transport of these oils through Saugerties should only be allowed if rail, car and other railroad safety issues are resolved and the at-grade private crossings in the Town of Saugerties are eliminated; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk of the Town of Saugerties is hereby directed to forward copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of New York and representatives of Saugerties in the New York State Legislature and Ulster County, and to the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Executive Director of the New York State Thruway Authority.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

