SENATE RESOLUTION No. 35

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 10, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Opposes PennEast Pipeline project in NJ.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

A SENATE RESOLUTION opposing the PennEast Pipeline project in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, The PennEast Pipeline Company is proposing to construct the PennEast Pipeline to bring Marcellus Formation shale gas to natural gas customers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, The proposed 120-mile, 36-inch diameter PennEast Pipeline will run from Luzerne County in northern Pennsylvania to Transco's pipeline interconnect near Pennington, Mercer County, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey taxpayers have made significant investments in open space and farmland preservation, as well as investments in the protection and restoration of the Delaware River Watershed; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has a long history of providing State funding for open space, farmland, and historic preservation programs, including 12 voter-approved general obligation bond acts and two constitutional dedications of tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, In 2014 nearly 65 percent of New Jersey voters approved a referendum to dedicate more tax dollars toward open space, farmland, and historic preservation, demonstrating the citizens' strong desire to increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and maintain the rural character of communities in a state as developed as New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Allowing a consortium of companies, including some from outside of New Jersey, to confiscate preserved green spaces for profit when taxpayers have already made a substantial investment in their preservation is unfair, unjust, and unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, There are many critical environmental resources including public water supplies, wetlands, marshes, rivers, forests, protected and preserved areas, threatened and endangered species, and other natural resources that would be impacted by the proposed pipeline, in addition to residents of local communities along the proposed pipeline route that may be negatively affected by the development, construction, and ongoing operation of the pipeline; and

WHEREAS, Billions of taxpayer dollars and funding from nonprofit organizations and the private sector have been spent to protect the health of the Delaware River Watershed, and the proposed pipeline would cut across the Delaware River, 76 streams, and 44 wetlands that supply drinking water to 19 million people, threatening to undermine that investment; and

WHEREAS, Sediment, debris, and chemicals emitted during construction and after the pipeline is built would threaten the State's drinking water, the sustainability of fish and wildlife, the agricultural economy, and the health of every individual that relies on the Delaware River as a drinking water source; and

WHEREAS, On January 19, 2018, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved certificates of public convenience and

necessity for PennEast to construct the pipeline; however, the project still requires approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the Delaware River Basin Commission; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey suffered from a catastrophic pipeline explosion and resulting fires in 1994, and according to a 2012 Pro Publica report, pipeline accidents killed more than 500 people, injured over 4,000, and cost nearly $7 billion in property damages nationally between 1986 and 2012; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey alone had 100 incidents during this time period, resulting in five fatalities, 55 injuries, and $76.7 million in damage; and

WHEREAS, In a July 2014 report, the United States Environmental Protection Agency listed New Jersey as the state with the highest levels of cast and wrought iron natural gas distribution mains and the tenth highest miles of unprotected steel natural gas mains which allow for large concentrations of methane leaks that contribute to global warming and local pollution that causes respiratory problems; and

WHEREAS, Ground level ozone, which is worsened by methane emissions, is a particular problem in New Jersey and companies interested in adding more pipelines across New Jersey should be required first to invest in repairing existing systems, and the federal government should provide more oversight to reduce the risk to the environment, and to public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, If approved, the PennEast Pipeline project will have a significant impact on privately-owned lands including farms, businesses, and residences, and may lower the value of surrounding properties in the communities along the proposed pipeline route; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House objects to and opposes the proposed PennEast Pipeline project as proposed because of the negative impacts it would have on the environment and surrounding communities it would transgress. This House also urges the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission to reject the project for the same or other appropriate reasons, but if they do approve it, to grant the approval only after all of the environmental and other related concerns of the affected communities are addressed and satisfied, and appropriate safeguards are put in place to protect the environment and surrounding communities.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Commissioner of the New

Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the Delaware River Basin Commission.

STATEMENT

This resolution objects to and opposes the proposed PennEast Pipeline project, because of the negative impacts it would have on the environment and surrounding communities it would transgress. The resolution also urges the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission to reject the project for the same or other appropriate reasons, but if they do approve it, to grant the approval only after all of the environmental and other related concerns of the affected communities are addressed and satisfied and appropriate safeguards are put in place to protect the environment and surrounding communities.

The PennEast Pipeline Company has proposed a 120-mile, 36-inch diameter natural gas pipeline that will extend from Luzerne County in northern Pennsylvania to an interconnect with Transco's pipeline near Pennington, Mercer County, New Jersey. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved certificates of public convenience and necessity for PennEast to construct the pipeline on January 19, 2018; however, the project still requires approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission.