

Protect Our Communities from Pilgrim Pipelines: Sign-On Letter to Make Sure Your Voice Is Heard!

This sign-on letter, initiated by the Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipelines, calls on the Cuomo Administration to conduct an exhaustive examination of the risks of the Pilgrim Pipelines, a proposed set of oil & petroleum products pipelines that threaten the health and safety of New York communities.

Non-profit organizations, civic groups, faith institutions, businesses, political clubs, and other community-based agencies and organizations are encouraged to sign on to this letter.

SIGN-ON LETTER

Basil Seggos, Commissioner
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233

Bill Finch, Acting Executive Director
New York State Thruway Authority Administrative Headquarters
P.O. Box 189
Albany, NY 12201

Dear Commissioner Seggos and Executive Director Finch:

New Yorkers, and particularly residents along the direct route of the proposed Pilgrim oil and petroleum products pipelines, have broad concerns about, and growing opposition to these two dangerous pipelines.

As the state environmental review process moves forward, we, the undersigned organizations, urge that the opportunity for public comment during the scoping process be commensurate with the enormous scale, scope, and intensity of the project and its potential impacts.

Because communities along the direct route risk being damaged forever, past the point of ecological or economic recovery, we ask that public meetings be held in each of the counties along the route, as well as a meeting in a community along the “bomb train” route that would supply crude oil to these pipelines, and one in New York City.

We ask for a 90 day comment period for the scoping process because the complexity and variety of concerns requires residents and municipal leaders to undertake time-consuming research associated with the proposal and the vast number of threats it poses, including:

- the pipelines' proposed route (which keeps changing);
- proposed drilling under or through 232 waterways;
- economic, physical, and environmental damage due to the construction hundreds of temporary and permanent access roads;
- air emissions and health impacts during the construction phase;
- destruction of wetlands, forests, farms, and floodplains due to drilling, potential spills, and the operating temperature of the pipelines;
- impacts on unique cultural, biological, historic, and archaeological resources, and, large-scale impacts contributing to climate change;

It is critical that you initiate a 90-day comment period because only issues raised during the scoping process can be addressed throughout the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process; the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is not required to address new issues raised after a Final Scope has been issued.

Moreover, the vast majority of New Yorkers who would be grossly impacted by the pipelines do not yet know about or comprehend the risks to their lives and well-being. The scoping process must provide adequate time and opportunity to engage not only those along the pipelines' direct route, but also Thruway drivers and those who live in New York City and other communities threatened by climate change. Because "bomb train" traffic into Albany would increase in order to service the Pilgrim pipelines, those who live along the oil trains route also need extra time, and a public meeting, to articulate this additional risk.

Because the Pilgrim pipelines would threaten the health and safety of millions of people and bring cascading, cumulative negative impacts far into the future, we ask that:

1. DEC make an extraordinary effort to maximize public engagement regarding the scoping process, to make all the meetings and comment deadlines widely known, beyond the usual methods, and to help the public understand the significance of their opportunity to participate in the scoping process.
2. Ninety days is the minimum length of time for public comment on the scoping process for these hazardous proposed pipelines;
3. Meetings be held in Rensselaer, Albany, Greene, Ulster, Orange, and Rockland Counties, specifically in the cities of Albany, Rensselaer, Kingston, and Newburgh;
4. A meeting be held in New York City, which has nothing to gain from these climate-altering pipelines and whose water supply system will be croaed by both pipelines;
5. At least one meeting be held along the route of the oil by rail traffic, which would increase to service the pipelines (such as Saratoga Springs, Buffalo, Utica).

If New Yorkers are not provided adequate opportunity to comment on the scope of the assessment of this dangerous project, the well-being and integrity of New York State itself will not be served.

Thank you for considering these requests.
Sincerely,

Cc: Governor Andrew M. Cuomo