

The Legislature of Rockland County



HARRIET D. CORNELL
Legislator – District 10
Chair, Environmental Committee

AGENDA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015 6:00 PM

ROLL CALL

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 30, 2015 MEETING

1. REF. NO. 5426 - URGING THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION TO INSTITUTE AN IMMEDIATE FREEZE ON NEW AIR AND WATER QUALITY PERMITS FOR ALL NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT APPLICATIONS, AND URGING THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO 1) PERFORM A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACT OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN NEW YORK STATE, AND 2) PUBLICLY ISSUE A WRITTEN REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS
(LEG. HARRIET D. CORNELL, LEGISLATURE) LG2015-91

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DRAFT

Introduced by:

Referral No.

,2015

Hon. Harriet D. Cornell, Sponsor

Hon. Alden H. Wolfe, Sponsor

RESOLUTION NO. _____ OF 2015

URGING THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION TO INSTITUTE AN IMMEDIATE FREEZE ON NEW AIR AND WATER QUALITY PERMITS FOR ALL NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT APPLICATIONS, AND URGING THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO 1) PERFORM A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACT OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN NEW YORK STATE, AND 2) PUBLICLY ISSUE A WRITTEN REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS

WHEREAS, in December of 2014 the State of New York banned the process of High Volume, Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing (HVHF) on account of potentially devastating public health and environmental outcomes associated with exposure to chemical and radioactive emissions and waste products; and

WHEREAS, the chemical and radioactive emissions associated with HVHF have been detected all along the extensive intersecting network of natural gas pipelines, compressor stations, metering stations and other facilities associated with the entire natural gas infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, this infrastructure extends into regions of New York State that are located far from the actual drilling sites or wellpads; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is considering proposals by multiple natural gas pipeline companies to expand the system of pipelines and compressor stations throughout New York State, including in Rockland County; and

WHEREAS, Spectra Energy Corp. of Houston, Texas is planning what is known as the Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM) Project, which would expand the pipeline capacity of an existing Algonquin Gas Transmission system into our region, allowing natural gas supplies from the Appalachian basin to flow into the Northeast; and

WHEREAS, transmission and distribution of natural gas through an extensive, far-reaching infrastructure can cause adverse health effects similar to those seen near drilling sites for HVHF; and

WHEREAS, natural gas pipeline infrastructure can expose humans and animals to carcinogens, mutagens, endocrine disruptors, neurotoxins, respiratory irritants, mucocutaneous irritants and toxins, as well as hematological and cardiovascular toxins, all of which are especially damaging to the development of embryos, fetuses and children, as well as to the reproduction and survival of livestock, poultry and wild animals; and

WHEREAS, there is documented evidence of frequent accidents involving infrastructure components due to faulty construction and general breakdown, including but not limited to internal and external corrosion, stress corrosion, welding failure at pipeline seams, damage to existing pipelines during construction of nearby new pipelines, and damage to existing pipelines during agricultural activities, leading to chemical leaks, explosions and fires, and

WHEREAS, there is documented evidence of damage to pipelines and compressor stations during extreme weather events such as floods, tornados, hurricanes, landslides and lightning storms, resulting in explosions, fires and other life-threatening events; and

WHEREAS these accidents can result in injury and death, and extraordinary damage to homes, property, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, via Resolution 2015-159 in April of 2015, the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) recognized the potential impact on human health and the environment associated with natural gas infrastructure, and supported a governmental assessment of the health and environmental risks associated with natural gas pipelines; and

WHEREAS, via Resolution 519 in June 2015, the American Medical Association (AMA), advocated for legislation that would require a comprehensive health impact assessment regarding the health risks that may be associated with natural gas pipelines; and

WHEREAS, while Rockland County Legislators are diverse in their views of the value of natural gas infrastructure expansion, the Legislature is unanimous in a commitment to promoting public health and safety by all reasonable means;

WHEREAS, the _____ Committee of the Legislature has met, considered, and by a _____ vote approved this Resolution; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Rockland County Legislature hereby urges the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to institute an immediate freeze on new air and water quality permits for all natural gas infrastructure project applications, and hereby urges the New York State Department of Health to 1) perform a thorough

assessment of the public health and safety impact of natural gas pipeline infrastructure in New York State, and 2) publicly issue a written report of its findings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk to the Legislature be and is hereby authorized and directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, New York State Governor; Joseph Martens, Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Howard Zucker, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health; Hon. David Carlucci and Hon. William J. Larkin, Jr., New York State Senators; Hon. Kenneth P. Zebrowski, Hon. Ellen Jaffee, Hon. James G. Skoufis, and Hon. Karl A. Brabenec, Members, New York State Assembly; and to such other persons as the Clerk, in his discretion, may deem proper in order to effectuate the purpose of this Resolution.

JB

LG-2015-91

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