

Public Hearing Info & Tips on Commenting

What: MDE public hearing on Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC's (owned by TransCanada) Application for a State Nontidal Wetlands and Waterways Permit for the Eastern Panhandle Expansion Project

When: December 19, 2017, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm (hearing starts at 7:00pm)

Where: Hancock High, 289 W Main St, Hancock, Maryland 21750

Before the hearing, we'll be holding a press conference with local elected leaders, landowners and pipeline activists, urging Governor Hogan to deny the pipeline permit. Then at 7:00 pm we will head into the public hearing, where you can testify and tell our leaders that we want to protect the drinking water source for over 6 million people and safeguard our communities from fracked-gas.

If you would like to present verbal testimony on why the wetlands and waterways permit should be denied, please see below for talking points.

To comment, you sign-up when you arrive for the meeting. Each individual public commenter will be limited in time based on the number of commenters that sign-up, but usually it's 3 to 5 minutes. After you write your testimony, practice it. If it runs too long, they will cut you off.

Tips for Preparing Your Testimony:

Make it Personal:

- Tailor your comments to your personal experience. For example:
 - A. "This issue is very important to my family because we have well water"
 - B. "I own a small business X. A fracked-gas pipeline under the Potomac in Maryland will mean X for my business and for our community."
 - C. I live in (city/town) and I am concerned about the safety impacts the pipeline will have on my family because our house is XX amount of miles from the pipeline.
- Additional Tips to Personalize Your Testimony
 - You can bring photos or other visuals to the podium to help you tell your story. Some examples of visuals include:
 - Pictures of a place threatened by the pipeline
 - Family portraits
 - Pictures of recreational activities on the pipeline route

General Risks of the Pipeline

- There are inherent risks with the construction of pipelines and the methods used to route them across rivers and waterways, from stormwater pollution to massive spills during the Hydraulic Directional Drilling method.
- The Hydraulic Directional Drilling method uses millions of gallons of bentonite slick water, typically laced with diesel fuel, to drill longitudinally under rivers and other structures.

- The intense pressure combined with the volume of slick water has led to blowout's during the drilling process that can discharge millions of gallons of slick water into streams and wetland
- A blowout spill at the Potomac River crossing on the TransCanada pipeline immediately threatens the Washington County MD and the Berkeley County, WV public water system for over 100,000 people.
- A Blowout spill can also occur on the Mountaineer Gas pipeline crossing of Sleepy Creek, Back Creek and Opequon creek; which are tributaries to the Potomac River.

Cumulative Impacts of TransCanada (PA-MD) & Mountaineer Gas Pipelines (WV)

- The TransCanada pipeline will transport fracked gas from Pennsylvania to supply gas to the Mountaineer Gas pipeline in West Virginia.
- MDE should consider the cumulative impacts of the TransCanada pipeline together with the directly-related Mountaineer Gas pipeline on all of Maryland's aquatic resources and public health, including upstream and downstream impacts.
- A catastrophic event from a stream crossing by Mountaineer Gas has just as much potential to contaminate drinking water supplies downstream as with the crossing of streams within Maryland or the Potomac River by TransCanada.
- The release of methane gas from either pipeline into aquifers and the Potomac River can impact wells and drinking water, adversely affecting the health of millions.
- MDE has the authority to require a broader 401 certification. This project will have more than minimal impacts to streams and wetlands, and thus should never have been allowed to apply under MD General Permit 5. MDE should do its own 401 certification to determine if Water Quality Standards will be violated by this project.

Drilling through sensitive geography

- The route proposed by TransCanada and Mountaineer Gas would cross sensitive limestone geology called Karst. Karst geology allows pollution to quickly flow through the ground and into aquifers that supply drinking water to private and public water systems.
- Karst geology encompasses over half of the Mountaineer Gas pipeline route and the TransCanada pipeline crossing of the Potomac River
- Karst geology increases the risk of a blowout spill.
- Karst geology also increases the magnitude of private and public water contamination if both pipelines were completed can directly affect over 10,000 people.

Harm to Wetlands and Wildlife

- The entire pipeline project will impact 19 streams and 10 wetlands in Maryland and 100 streams and wetlands in West Virginia.

- A 75 foot path will be cleared along the entire route of both pipelines through forests and farm land. This cleared path has the potential to pollute streams and wetlands with sediment run off, reducing habitat for aquatic species.
- The pipeline route will pass through stream systems that have endangered flora and fauna.

Economic Impacts of the Pipeline

- TransCanada and Mountaineer Gas have not shown an economic need for the gas pipeline and have significant economic impacts on property owners and local governments.
- Neither gas company has shown a list of businesses that will be customers of the distribution line or a list of lost businesses from a lack of gas supply in the eastern panhandle.
- Property values will drop on land surrounding the pipeline route.
- Counties will receive decreased property tax revenue from the drop in property values.
- Maryland communities will experience no economic benefits from the TransCanada pipeline.
- Local governments will be responsible for all expenses related to the contamination of water treatment facilities and the water distribution infrastructure.