

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



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October 17, 2011

*BY FAX*

Honorable Kimberly D. Bose  
Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A  
Washington, D.C. 20426

Re: Millennium Pipeline Company, L.L.C., Docket No. CP11-515-000  
Minisink Compressor Project

Dear Secretary Bose:

As a New York State Senator and Ranking Minority Member of the Environmental Conservation Committee, I am very concerned about the possible adverse impacts of the proposed Minisink Compressor Project. I am writing to request that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC") initiate a full Environmental Impact Study along with a Health Impact Study as part of its review of this proposal.

Although I serve the 11<sup>th</sup> Senate District in Queens, many residents living in the impacted area of Minisink are public sector NYPD and FDNY employees that provide a vital service to my district as well as all of NYC.

Several amongst them are 911 first responders living with health issues as result of their service to the city during that tragic time period. They have served us at great personal risk and continue to serve us despite that risk, and thus I feel a special obligation to ensure that their interests (homes, health, and safety) are being safeguarded.

There is growing evidence, emerging from areas such as Dish, Texas and Bradford County, Pennsylvania, that long term exposure to emissions from gas compression stations can cause adverse health issues. I urge FERC to consult with independent health professionals to fully investigate these possible adverse consequences. If independent health professionals find the potential for risks I request that FERC deny approval of this project.

Moreover, it is my understanding that there are very little emergency response resources in the proposed area. Our firefighters assume enough risk serving New York City. It would be unconscionable to allow their family members to be placed at any risk of harm from fire, explosion, or exposure to hazardous materials. New Yorkers value our fire fighters much more than cheap natural gas.

New York City regulations preclude New York City police and firefighters from living beyond Orange County. The Minisink area is virtually on the edge of Orange County, hence home to so many NYC police and firefighters. It is one of the few areas where these public service employees can afford to live to provide a decent quality of life and education to their children, comply with regulations, and still commute to the city. If they are forced to leave that area and move further out or if they face great financial hardship due to decreased property values it will adversely impact all of New York City. The economic impact on this vital middle class community must be considered by FERC.

As a member of the Agricultural Committee, I am also concerned about potential adverse impacts not only on our environment but agricultural sector as well and, most importantly, the potential for adverse impacts on our food and water shed. The Minisink area is home to many dairy farms that provide milk and dairy products throughout New York State. It also contains many organic farms and wineries which are an increasingly vibrant component of our state's economy. These are key growth sectors in economic projections for our state. We cannot afford to compromise them in any way. Thus, I ask that FERC have independent scientists evaluate the impact of air emissions on crops and livestock and consult with Food Safety and Organic Food Consumer organizations as part of its review. If there are any risks to these sectors I ask that FERC deny approval.

As always I remain concerned about the environmental impact of this proposal. The entire Minisink Valley is a cherished and ecologically sensitive region in New York State. It contains the Walkill River National Wildlife Refuge as well as a portion of the Appalachian Trail. The Refuge contains thousands of acres of rare and endangered plant and animal species including many species of migratory birds which can be impacted by the proposed project.

It is also my understanding that the residents have proposed a very reasonable alternative of expanding a segment of the pipeline which would allow for any compression facilities to be moved to a more remote location. This shows a good faith effort on the part of the community to help find a solution that does not risk public health and safety. I concur that this proposal is better suited in a more remote and less sensitive area and urge FERC and Millennium to seek alternatives.

The well-being of Minisink, known as the "town of guns and hoses", is intimately tied to the well being of New York City. And, the air, water, and food of rural New York eventually reaches urban New York. Thus, I will closely monitor the FERC process and am hopeful that the commissioners will do a thorough Environmental Impact Study and a comprehensive Health Impact Study, and will not issue any approvals that place this community at risk.

The current political climate in our country mandates that all public officials begin placing the needs and concerns of the American people ahead of those of private corporations. Public resentment is quickly evolving into anger and outrage. It would be an absolute indictment of regulatory process if public officials failed to protect this community and any harm came to them as a result.

Sincerely,



Tony Avella  
State Senator  
11<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District

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