



**Testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey; Pinelands Commission, Toms River, NJ July 26, 2017**

**Re: Southern Reliability Link Pipeline**

My name is Nancy Hedinger and I am President of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey, a nonpartisan public interest organization. The League strongly opposes the Southern Reliability Link Pipeline and urges you to uphold your mandate to support the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and vote No on this application.

First, a significant portion of the proposed route is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area. The Pinelands Act states that this area is “especially vulnerable” to the degradation of water and degradation would cause “a severe adverse impact upon the entire pinelands area.”

This Southern Reliability pipeline does not meet essential water resource protections that were outlined in the Management Plan. The pipeline traverses two Superfund sites for which the EPA has required specific remediation actions, risking further spreading of contaminants. We are particular concerned with the spread of these contaminants in the unusual and highly vulnerable surface water table Kirkwood-Cohansey 17 Trillion gallon aquifer.

A pipeline construction project in Pennsylvania has just contaminated the well water of 30 homes, and the Rover natural gas pipeline in Ohio just buried 6.5 acres of key wetlands with up to two feet of drilling muds - wetlands the gas company vowed to protect in their application. In both cases the companies were using Horizontal Directional Drilling to lay the pipeline, a technique that New Jersey Natural Gas also plans to use.

Regulations require that a pipeline which lies within federal installations in the Pinelands must only be constructed if there is a demonstrated “need.” This pipeline does not meet the condition of demonstrated need, and if such “need” were to exist, it would not be greater than the need to protect the aquifer and the wetlands of the Pinelands.

The Pinelands Commission was established to protect the critical water supply of residents and plant and animal species, unique in all the world but living in our precious Pinelands. The League urges you to fulfill your mandate to protect the Pinelands, one of New Jersey’s most amazing assets; an incalculably valuable area of open space and biological diversification. The drinking and agricultural water supply for the region is at stake, as is the integrity of the Pinelands Act and the Comprehensive Management Plan adopted to protect it.

As stewards of the Pinelands, you must vote against this pipeline.

Thank you.

Submitted by: Nancy Hedinger, President, League of Women Voters of New Jersey