



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

January 12, 2017

New Jersey Pinelands Commission
P.O. Box 359
15 Springfield Ave.
New Lisbon, NJ 08064

Dear Chairman Earlen and Commission Members:

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is a nonpartisan public interest organization, founded on the principles of public participation, good government, and transparency. We are writing to urge you to deny permission for the proposed 22 mile pipeline which would traverse the Pinelands Preservation Area.

The League of Women Voters has supported the Pinelands Protection Act since 1979. The Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) acknowledges different management areas of the Pine Barrens, with strict environmental standards to protect the aquifer. It is through this most protected of the areas that the proposed pipeline will traverse. On several past occasions the Pinelands Commission has denied applications for any kind of construction within the Protected Forest Area. Granting approval for the construction of this pipeline would be a clear violation of the CMP and would set a dangerous precedent which could be used to open the Barrens for development. The CMP clearly states the requirements in order to grant waivers, and the proposed pipeline does not meet those criteria.

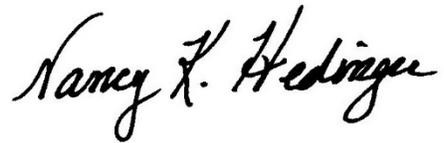
There is no unique need for this pipeline between Cumberland County and Cape May County. As proposed, the pipeline would deliver natural gas to the B.L. England Plant, for the purpose of creating electricity. The claim has been made that waivers should be granted because this electricity is needed by and would be delivered to residents within the Pinelands. However, all electricity generated at the B.L. England plant is sent directly to the PJM grid and then distributed by the grid to customers. No electricity goes directly from the B.L. England plant to a private home or individual business within the Barrens. Therefore, no direct benefit is conferred on any resident of the Pinelands on those few occasions when the plant is operation. This does not meet the waiver standards as set forth in your CMP.

The Pinelands National Reserve comprises 1.1 million acres, almost 22% of the land area of our state, and is located over the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer which holds an incredible 17 trillion gallons of pure water in a rare "surficial" or "water-table" aquifer in which surface water and streams are also part of the aquifer. Because of this, any disturbance has the potential to do irreparable harm. In 1978 Congress declared it a National Reserve, the first in the nation. In fact, in 1988, the UN designated the Pinelands as a single-site Biosphere Reserve, further protecting the area from any disturbance. This is one of the most unique areas in the world.

We understand the need for business to make a profit by constructing pipelines; that is their role. But your role as a governmental agency is one that looks at the long term effects of these types of applications. You are charged with ensuring the health and safety and clean water protections for the residents of New Jersey.

For all of the above reasons, we oppose the construction of a 22 mile pipeline in the protected area of the Pinelands National Reserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy K. Hedinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Hedinger, President

League of Women Voters of New Jersey