

Sabrina Fedel, Pittsburgh, PA.

I write to encourage FERC to more fully consider the impacts of the proposed Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) Regional Energy Access Expansion (REAE) project (docket number CP21-94-000) in terms of its significant climate impacts, its impacts to environmental justice communities, and the irreparable harm it will inflict upon Pennsylvania's pristine streams, forests, and other natural resources. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is woefully inadequate and fails to address the scope of negative effects that would result from this project.

First, FERC admits that the climate change impacts of this pipeline will be significant but then does no further analysis of these impacts and does not take these impacts into account. This is unacceptable given the stakes that we all face from a warming climate. FERC should consider the environmental impacts of the additional greenhouse gas emissions, including upstream impacts and downstream GHG emissions.

Second, FERC acknowledges that the impacts of certain project components may be predominately borne by environmental justice communities, but then concludes that the impacts of the project as a whole on environmental justice communities were not high enough. This minimizes the real and acknowledged impact that this pipeline will have on environmental justice communities. Burying that impact in conclusions about the project as a whole sacrifices those communities to a pipeline.

Finally, this pipeline will have significant and permanent impacts on some of Pennsylvania's highest quality water resources. The project would impact 114 Exceptional Value (EV) wetlands and 37 High Quality (HQ) streams. Many of the streams that would be crossed by the project are cold water trout streams that are very sensitive to degradation. Clearing the forest around these streams exposes them to direct sunlight, raising the water temperature and jeopardizing their suitability as trout waters. Cutting forests and riparian buffers also creates habitat fragmentation. This fragmentation should be evaluated in terms of not only the impacts caused by these particular pipeline segments but also by other cuts in the same region, either by Transco on its other pipeline pieces or by other pipeline/linear projects. In addition, when the stream crossing includes a cut through a pre-existing mature and healthy forest, the degradation of the forest on either side of the Right-of-Way that results from this forest fragmentation also needs to be considered in terms of both stream impacts and forest impacts. Transco does not have all of its required permits from state agencies and has not provided adequate mitigation measures.

The pipeline is also proposed to be constructed within the habitat of several threatened and endangered plant and animal species including white-fringed orchid, Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, timber rattlesnake, and bog turtle. Potential impacts to wood turtles are completely ignored in the DEIS, and this omission should be corrected and impacts to wood turtles should be considered.

I honestly don't know what it will take for this Administration to listen to the experts. We are on the precipice of global ecosystems collapse and you're talking about oil and gas as if it's a viable future. It's not.

For these reasons, I encourage FERC to refuse to approve the Transco REAE Project. Thank you.