

Resolution Opposing the Pilgrim Pipeline

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Torres who moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Logan to wit:

Whereas, Pilgrim Pipeline Company is proposing to build a bi-directional pipeline through the Town of New Paltz that would transport crude oil and refined petroleum products between Albany, New York and Linden, New Jersey; and

Whereas, the pipeline will carry oil from the Bakken Shale region of North Dakota extracted through a process of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, which has been found to contaminate clean water resources, create toxic air emissions and radioactive waste and release large quantities of methane gas into the atmosphere; and

Whereas, data collected by the Capline Pipeline in Louisiana, which tested crude from 86 locations worldwide, indicates that crude from the Bakken Shale has far higher vapor pressure than crude from dozens of other locations, making it much more likely to throw off combustible gases; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Safety Materials Administration (PHMSA) issued a safety alert on January 2, 2014, to the general public, emergency first responders, and shippers and carriers regarding the particular flammability of Bakken Crude oil; and

Whereas, the Pipeline will carry a large amount of Bakken crude oil through residential areas in the should an explosion or spill occur; and

Whereas, according to PHMSA, pipeline operators reported 1,880 crude oil spills nationwide between 2003 and 2013, or nearly one spill every other day, resulting in 44,265,438 gallons of oil being spilled; and

Whereas, 80 percent of these spills were the result of corrosion, equipment failure, incorrect operation or material and weld failures; and

Whereas, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, PHMSA only has 135 inspectors to oversee 2.6 million miles of pipeline, and only a fifth of that pipeline system has been inspected by PHMSA or its state partners since 2006; and

Whereas, any rupture or compromise of the pipeline, even without an explosion or fire, could, in the opinion of the Town Board, require extraordinary cleanup efforts, force residents from their homes, and place a large number of residents in close proximity to hazardous materials; and

Whereas, most New Paltz residents depend on ground water and public community water systems for potable water supplies, the integrity and safety of which may, in the opinion of the Town Board, be jeopardized by the Pipeline; and

Whereas, the Pilgrim Pipeline is proposed to be laid in areas containing aquifers particularly sensitive to contamination, including karst aquifer, unconfined sand aquifer, and alluvial aquifer upon which residents depend for drinking water; and

Whereas, the Town of New Paltz has a ban on hydro fracking; and

Whereas, in the opinion of the Town Board, there appears to be no direct benefits to the community. We find that the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline potentially threatens the health, safety, and welfare of the community; could decrease the values of homes located along its route and in surrounding neighborhoods; and could negatively impact future development in the Town; and

Whereas, the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan calls for becoming less energy and fossil fuel intensive while strengthening the regional economy, expanding renewable energy generation exponentially across the Region, and improving the resilience of the energy delivery system; and

Whereas, construction of the Pilgrim Pipeline to support and expand markets for fossil fuels is directly contrary to these clean energy goals; and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Town Board of the Town of New Paltz:

1. The Town of New Paltz has a ban on fracking
2. Calls upon the New York State Thruway Authority to reject use of its right-of-way for the purpose of transporting oil or gas by pipeline; and further calls upon the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to deny an exception to its Accommodation Plan for said purpose; and
3. Urges Governor Cuomo and State Legislature to oppose construction of the Pilgrim Pipeline in New York State; and
4. Directs the Town Clerk to forward copies of this resolution to NYS Thruway Chair Howard P. Milstein, NYS DOT Commissioner Joan McDonald, U.S. PHMSA Administrator Cynthia L. Quarterman, U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand and U.S. Representative Chris Gibson, Governor Andrew Cuomo, N.Y Assembly Member Kevin Cahill, N.Y. Senator John Bonacic, and NYS DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens.

All aye votes cast, motion carried.