



December 15, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
New York State Capitol
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write to ask that you direct the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to serve as lead agency for the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) review of the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline.

The proposed Pilgrim Pipeline is a 178-mile double pipeline that the developers believe would be able to send 400,000 gallons of crude oil and refined petroleum products per day between Albany, New York, and Linden, New Jersey. The project sponsor, Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings, LLC, has submitted a Use and Occupancy Permit Application and Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the New York State Thruway Authority. On November 16th, 2015, the Thruway Authority issued a Lead Agency Coordination Letter to multiple entities to determine interest in lead agency status for the SEQR review.

We firmly believe that the DEC is in the best position to fully evaluate the environmental, health, safety, and economic impacts of this pipeline. Furthermore, DEC has the tools (e.g. Commissioner Policy 49 that makes climate change a “fundamental consideration” in all DEC decisions¹) and expertise to consider whether the proposed pipeline will impact New York’s goal to reduce climate pollution by 40 percent of 1990 levels by the year 2030 and 80 percent by 2050.

Your commitment to an economy-wide strategy to cut climate pollution, coupled with aggressive clean power and energy efficiency targets, is the kind of leadership that will influence the rest of

¹ DEC Commissioner Policy 49, Climate Change and DEC Action, http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/commisclimchpolicy.pdf.

the country in the fight against climate change. However, we find it difficult to see how our climate and clean energy goals can be met if this proposal to build fossil fuel infrastructure designed to last 50 years or more is approved.

The Pilgrim Pipeline will increase climate-altering pollution and endanger every community through which it passes. The proposed pipeline threatens New York State's resources, including the Hudson River and its tributaries, public water supplies, and protected wetlands. A crude oil spill near or in the Hudson River could rapidly undo the progress we have made to improve its water quality. Moreover, the Thruway right-of-way is an invaluable corridor that should be reserved for the greatest public benefit, such as supporting the development of renewable energy.

In addition, there is the real concern that the Thruway Authority has a conflict of interest in coordinating the SEQR review because it stands to gain revenues from the Pilgrim Pipeline's use of the Thruway right-of-way. To avoid this, the scientists and engineers at DEC are best equipped to coordinate the SEQR review of this multi-jurisdictional pipeline and ensure that adequate precautions are taken to protect the people and environment of New York State.

We trust that you agree that this proposed pipeline deserves a thorough environmental and climate review, given the very significant potential adverse impacts involved. We respectfully request you direct the Department of Environmental Conservation, which has the greatest capacity and expertise to handle the evaluation of such impacts, to serve as lead agency for the Pilgrim Pipeline review.

Sincerely,

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cc: Robert Megna, Executive Director, New York State Thruway Authority
Basil Seggos, Acting Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation