

Dinniman: Six pipeline questions **that need answers**



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As we enter a new year, serious concerns about the safety of the Sunoco's Mariner East pipelines are not going away. In fact, they're only growing and so are our voices. Important questions about these pipelines – pipelines carrying highly volatile natural gas liquids such as butane and propane – will be front-and-center in 2018. Six fundamental issues, left unanswered, need, deserve, and demand resolution in the new year. They are:

1. Why did the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approve Sunoco's water permit for Chester and Delaware counties based on inadequate information, most notably a faulty list of private wells used for public notification? In reviewing documentation, it's striking that DEP allowed Sunoco to use a list that was so obviously incomplete. In fact, *so* inadequate was the list of wells that it only included 22 entries (three in Chester County) of private, residential wells that could be impacted along Mariner East's more than 300-mile route in Pennsylvania.
2. How long until DEP releases this list of residents potentially impacted by the pipelines? I've been forced to file a Right-to-Know request to obtain such information – information that is needed to ensure that residents located near the pipeline route are notified in a timely manner. We already know that several residents whose wells were negatively impacted by drilling indicated that they were not given the prior notice of construction as required under the permit. How can we know that DEP is enforcing the water permit if it won't even share the information it needs to do so? And how can DEP contend that such information should be withheld, when it is generated using public resources?

3. Why didn't the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) conduct its own risk analysis before granting approvals, including approving Sunoco's use of eminent domain as a public utility? And why hasn't the governor's office demanded that an independent risk assessment be completed? In fact, in granting public utility/eminent domain status for Mariner East II and III, the PUC cited an antiquated permit of conveyance dating back to the 1930s from the original petroleum pipeline. Remember, these pipelines are carrying materials that are so potentially dangerous that any explosion would offer little opportunity to escape and would likely result in loss of life. Recently, the PUC once again showed it disregard for public safety when it allowed Sunoco to get out of building a valve station in West Goshen.
4. Why has the governor's Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force Report sat on a shelf gathering dust while the concerns associated with the Mariner East pipelines weigh heavy on so many citizens' minds? After extensive work and discussion, the task force made several important recommendations regarding pipeline placement and safety in its final report. Our citizens are owed an explanation as to why the task force report and its recommendations have gone largely ignored.
5. Why did DEP approve pipeline construction in the Route 30 corridor, an area with a unique geologic formation that is prone to sink holes, in the first place? Karst formations are no place for pipelines. So, it's no coincidence that drilling activities have been plagued by geologic problems including contaminated wells, a growing sinkhole, and various aquifer issues. Most states have strict regulations for pipeline construction in high-consequence and densely populated areas, like Exton. But, we live in Pennsylvania where it seems like anything goes for pipeline companies.
6. Why hasn't DEP, the PUC, or the governor's office, including his secretary of legislative affairs, spoken out in support of the multiple bills calling for improved pipeline safety? Perhaps, the answer is the same as to why the pipeline task force report has gone ignored.

The thousands of area residents questioning the safety and construction of the Mariner pipelines do not oppose the economic benefits and jobs coming from the Marcellus Shale industry. Instead, they are mothers and fathers, of all political

stripes, who care deeply about the safety of their children and family members who attend schools or live in retirement communities near the pipeline's path.

Until these six questions are answered and other public safety issues resolved, I, as state Senator, continue to stand in solidarity with my constituents in asking the governor to exercise his authority under Title 35 to halt pipeline construction. We must ensure that our health, safety, and well-being are put before corporate profits.

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