

ADVOCATES AND LANDOWNERS FROM FOUR STATES FILE FEDERAL APPEAL TO SPECTRA PIPELINE PROJECT
FOLLOWING FERC'S REFUSAL OF EIGHT GROUPS AND CITIES' REQUEST FOR REHEARING

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Washington DC - Yesterday, a coalition* of ten groups from four states, including Riverkeeper, Inc., Food & Water Watch, Reynolds Hill, Inc., Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE) and a dozen individuals filed a petition with the District of Columbia Court of Appeals asking the court to review the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) approval of Spectra Energy's Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM) gas pipeline expansion project. On January 28, 2016, after a nine-month delay during which construction began, FERC denied eight separate rehearing requests from groups, individuals and municipalities, including the City of Boston and coalition members. Those who were denied a rehearing had sixty days to file a federal appeal, ending yesterday. The City of Boston and the Township of Dedham, Massachusetts have also filed Federal appeals in the case.

The AIM project is particularly contentious because it includes construction of a 42-inch diameter high pressure interstate gas pipeline within 105 feet of critical infrastructure at the aging Indian Point nuclear facility, which is situated at the intersection of two earthquake fault lines. A 36-inch pipeline that is part of the AIM project also runs within 500 feet of a stone quarry in the West Roxbury section of Boston, where active blasting occurs. Following a tritium leak from Indian Point in February, New York's Governor Cuomo asked FERC to stay construction on the project while an independent study of the health and safety impacts could be conducted. Last Friday, FERC denied his request too.

"Spectra Energy's AIM expansion project has always been a spectacularly bad idea," said Karina Wilkinson, Food & Water Watch Local Coordinator MA. "We have taken every step we could to oppose this project and now we have no other legal recourse than to go to Federal court. Time and again, we have seen fracked gas pipeline companies trample the rights of individuals and communities. We cannot rely on government agencies to protect us from the devastating consequences that will impact our country and the planet if the rush to profit is allowed to continue and if the U.S. continues to move forward with gaining access to the fossil fuel export market."

Riverkeeper President Paul Gallay said "It's disturbing that a federal regulator that's duty-bound to protect the health and welfare of the public remains oblivious to the many potential dangers and pitfalls this project creates. It is even more disturbing that FERC continues to ignore the real risks involved with running a gas pipeline adjacent to the property of an aging, problematic nuclear plant, which poses a great risk to the region even without this project."

Affected property owner and SAPE member Nancy Vann stated "We've been raising valid concerns about this project since 2013 - but when a captive agency like FERC is making the decisions and then reviewing its own conclusions it's difficult to obtain a fair hearing. We are pleased to finally be able to take our issues to Federal court and are hopeful that they will get the consideration they deserve."

In addition to concerns about Indian Point and the quarry, our groups are highly concerned about the issue of "segmentation" of the Algonquin pipeline expansion into three separate FERC proposals. By calling this one pipeline's expansion by three different names, Spectra Energy has so far managed to avoid review of the full project's environmental impacts. Courts have found that type of manipulation to be unlawful in similar cases.

*The New York-based groups are: Food & Water Watch NY, Riverkeeper, Inc., Reynolds Hill, Inc., Sierra Club Lower Hudson Chapter, and Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion. The Massachusetts-based groups are: Charles River Spring Valley Neighborhood Association, Food & Water Watch MA, West Roxbury Saves Energy and Better Future Project. Fossil Free Rhode Island and Capitalism vs. the Climate from Connecticut represent the other two states impacted by the project.

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