



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Philadelphia District

Public Notice

Public Notice No.
CENAP-PL-E-17-03

Date
16 June 2017

Internet Homepage:

<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Public-Notices-Reports/>

In Reply Refer to: Environmental Resources Branch

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Philadelphia District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to evaluate an easement agreement allowing PennEast Pipeline Company, LLC to construct and operate a pipeline through USACE owned/administered properties at the Francis E. Walter Dam and Reservoir located in Carbon and Luzerne Counties, Pennsylvania. The Draft EA was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and the Corps' Engineering Regulation 200-2-2, Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, 4 March 1988. The results, as found in the Draft EA, show that the Proposed Action would not have significant adverse impact to the environment on the USACE owned/administered properties at the Francis E. Walter Dam and Reservoir. At the conclusion of the public comment period, it is anticipated that a FONSI would be appropriate and would be signed for the Proposed Action. An Environmental Impact Statement; therefore, is not necessary to implement the Proposed Action.

The purpose of the Francis E. Walter Reservoir crossing is to facilitate construction of the Mainline Route of the natural gas pipeline Project. The entire PennEast pipeline project would entail the construction of approximately 114.6 miles of 36-inch diameter pipeline from Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, to Mercer County, New Jersey. The Project's approximately 114.6-mile Mainline Route crosses USACE owned/administrated properties at the Francis E. Water Reservoir between mile post 23.0 and 23.1. The proposed pipeline would cross the Lehigh River approximately 2.8 river miles upstream of the Francis E. Walter Dam.


Alternatives for the Proposed Action considered in this EA include the No Action Alternative, and four different routing alternatives. The selected proposed final alignment route through the project area was based on public and agency input and included a minimization and avoidance of impacts. The proposed alignment was further evaluated using construction method alternatives: 1) dam and pump open cut crossing; 2) flume crossing; 3) Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD); and 4) direct pipe. The No Action Alternative, which provides environmental baseline conditions, was determined to be unfeasible as it does not address the project's purpose and need. The flume crossing, direct pipe and HDD alternatives were determined to have potential for

greater environmental impacts based on the project area footprint and constructability. The preferred alternative involves the use of the dam and pump open cut crossing methodology. This method would avoid and minimize impacts to the Lehigh River and surrounding resources.

All natural and social environmental factors that may be relevant to the Proposed Action, including the cumulative effects thereof, were considered in the Draft EA. Potential impacts were assessed with regard to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem, endangered and threatened species, hazardous and toxic materials, aesthetics and recreation, safety, cultural and historic resources, and the general needs and welfare of the public. The Draft EA determined that the Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts to the natural or human environment, but impacts will include, and are not limited to, temporary noise and displacement of wildlife during construction, changes in existing land uses and existing visual/aesthetic resources, topography, wildlife habitats, and vegetation. Short term impacts on aquatic resources, traffic, and recreation could also be expected. The Proposed Action will avoid and minimize all impacts on resources in the project area and will include the restoration and mitigation of impacts to these resources, consistent with USACE's restoration goals.

The public and all agencies are invited to comment on this proposal. The public notice and the Draft Environmental Assessment are available for review on the Philadelphia District web page at <http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Public-Notices-Reports/>. Any person may request, in writing, to the District Engineer, within the comment period specified in this notice (**16 June through 17 July 2017**) that a public hearing be held to consider this proposal. Requests for a public hearing shall state, in detail, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

All comments on the work described in this public notice and/or in the Draft Environmental Assessment should be directed to Mr. Peter R. Blum, Chief Planning Division, ATTN: Environmental Resources Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3390 by **16 July 2017**. Comments on the proposed work may also be submitted via email to the Philadelphia District's Public Affairs Office at PDPA-NAP@usace.army.mil.

for 
Peter R. Blum
Chief, Planning Division
Philadelphia District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers