



Legislation Text

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Preconsidered Res. No. 845

Resolution calling upon the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to deny the Water Quality Certification permit for the construction of the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline through New York Harbor.

By Council Members Constantinides, the Speaker (Council Member Johnson), Richards, Kallos, Espinal, Menchaca, King, Ayala, Rivera and Rosenthal

Whereas, The Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline proposed by Williams Companies Inc. (Williams) would carry natural gas extracted from the ground via the process of hydraulic fracturing to customers in lower New York by connecting to an existing pipeline across New York Harbor; and

Whereas, Natural gas can be comprised of anywhere from 70 to 90% methane which is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, as it traps heat in the earth's atmosphere by 30 to 80 times in magnitude; and

Whereas, A recent NASA study into atmospheric methane levels has identified oil and gas exploration as a major contributor to the sharp rise in methane concentrations beginning in 2006; and

Whereas, Further, multiple studies by various researchers have found methane leakage from hydraulic fracturing operations at rates much higher than the levels that industry reports suggest; and

Whereas, The State of New York has committed to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and New York City has committed to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

Whereas, The State of New York has also committed to 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind energy by 2035, and 6,000 megawatts of solar energy by 2025, which will reduce the need for new fossil fuel infrastructure; and

Whereas, The City and State's emissions reduction goals cannot be reached without a shift away from fossil fuels and an increased reliance on renewable energy generation; and

Whereas, The United States (U.S.) Energy Information Administration's forecast for natural gas use is flat due to a downward trend in demand, efficiency gains in new equipment, and an increased load capture by the renewable energy sector; and

Whereas, Williams' projection of a 10% increase in demand is contradicted by analyses by the New York Independent System Operator, the Long Island Power Authority, and the U.S. Energy Information Administration; and

Whereas, The construction of the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline will require trenching through under water sediment heavily contaminated with toxins such as polychlorinated biphenyls, arsenic, and lead; and

Whereas, The act of trenching would uncover these toxic sediments, releasing them back into the environment and back into the food chain; and

Whereas, Many of these toxins are known to bio-accumulate in marine life, posing a serious threat to the marine ecosystem, including many important or endangered species of fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, and invertebrates; and

Whereas, The bioaccumulation of polychlorinated biphenyls, arsenic, and lead, in sea-life poses a threat to the Mid Atlantic fishing industry, as well as to the health of anyone who consumes the products of said industry; and

Whereas, A study published by the Journal of Science in 2018 found that the domestic oil and natural gas industry leaked an estimated 13 million metric tons of methane a year from various points along a respective supply pipeline, 2.3% of the total annual extracted supply; and

Whereas, According to another study from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies'

Journal of Industrial Ecology, published in 2016, an increase to 4% leakage would negate any emission reduction gains made by switching from coal to natural gas; and

Whereas, Williams Companies has been reported to have at least 64 environmental violations since the year 2000; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to deny the Water Quality Certification permit for the construction of the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline through New York Harbor.

NRC  
LS# 7706  
4/02/19