

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Contact: Joe Heath, [jheath@atsny.com](mailto:jheath@atsny.com), 315-447-4851 or Isaac Silberman-Gorn, [i.silbermangorn@gmail.com](mailto:i.silbermangorn@gmail.com), 607-296-8265

## **Millennium Pipeline Company Stops Progress on Constructing Gas Pipeline Along Interstate 81 Corridor**

Syracuse, NY- In a recent communication to attorney Joe Heath (General Counsel for the Onondaga Nation), the Millennium Pipeline Company indicated that it has put on hold its proposal to construct a 60 mile-long, high-pressure natural gas pipeline between Endicott and Syracuse. The proposed pipeline would extend through parts of Broome and Onondaga Counties and all of Cortland County. In May 2013, the pipeline company announced a “non-binding open season” to solicit customers in order to justify the construction of a new 24-inch diameter, high-pressure pipeline that would transfer hydrofracked gas from Pennsylvania to several existing pipelines that run east-west through New York State: the Millennium Pipeline, the Dominion Pipeline, and the Tennessee Pipeline. The proposed pipeline would require at least one compressor station along the route.

In an email sent on December 16<sup>th</sup>, a Senior Vice President for Commercial Operations of the Millennium Pipeline Company explained that “the markets participation in the project did not materialize in a sufficient quantity to justify the pursuit of the project at this time.” Heath takes this to mean that “at least for now, we are not threatened by this pipeline that would run through our neighborhoods, wetlands, streams, and near lakes.”

Upon learning of the open-season announcement, attorney Joe Heath helped organize the Stop the I-81 Pipeline group, a diverse coalition of concerned community members. The group formed to research the proposed pipeline and its potential impacts on landowners and the environment. Volunteers began mapping the pipeline route, which Millennium proposed running along the old rights of way for the now abandoned Sun Oil pipeline. The group opposes construction of this major gas pipeline because it would result in threats to public health and safety; inadequate compensation and increased liability for landowners; property damage and devaluation; environmental damage; and methane emissions that exacerbate the global climate crisis.

The Stop the I-81 Pipeline group was able to collect names of targeted landowners and invite them to informational community meetings that were conducted in the towns of Homer, Lafayette, and Maine. At these meetings, landowners along the pipeline route were able to learn about the proposal, what they should expect to hear from the company, their rights as landowners to refuse Millennium’s offers, and what to expect if they accepted. Landowners were urged to resist pushy and deceptive offers from pipeline company representatives, to seek experienced legal counsel, and to consider holding out for eminent domain proceedings, which offer landowners greater compensation and protections.

The Stop the I-81 Pipeline group feels that its resistance may well have played a part in Millennium's cessation of progress to construct this pipeline, in addition to the lack of “markets participation” as the company claims. Stanley Scobie, a member of the group and Senior Fellow with Physicians Scientists & Engineers for Healthy Energy commented, “This is a great, if temporary, victory for public health, landowner rights, and a brighter future geared around clean energy rather than more dangerous, dirty fossil fuel infrastructure.” Mr. Heath affirmed that “even though we have held the hydrofrackers at bay in New York, we are still being targeted by gas infrastructure projects that will ruin our

communities. We must be ready to respond to projects that threaten our communities and the environment. We need to continue to build the fossil fuel resistance movement that is the most significant grass roots movement here in over a century.”

Examples of other gas-related projects existing or in the works in New York include: large scale liquefied natural gas and petroleum gas storage, distribution and processing facilities and associated transportation systems, hydrofracking waste imported into New York landfills or spread on roads, injection disposal wells, distribution of hazardous silica sand, compressor stations, export terminals to ship gas to markets abroad, and water withdrawals for hydrofracking in Pennsylvania.

The Stop the I-81 Pipeline group is notifying landowners along the proposed pipeline route that Millennium has decided to put the project on hold. The group will continue to monitor the situation and educate landowners. Residents of Broome, Cortland, and Onondaga Counties who are concerned about the pipeline should visit [stop81pipeline.wordpress.com](http://stop81pipeline.wordpress.com) or call (315) 475-2559 for more information.

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