

Maryland Board of Public Works
Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

June 30, 2020

Dear Members of the Maryland Board of Public Works:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our opposition to two proposals to build gas pipelines through Maryland. We know that these interconnected projects would reverse course on our region's efforts to protect the health and safety of our communities and combat climate change.

The Eastern Shore Natural Gas Company (ESNG) is seeking approval to build 19 miles of new pipeline that would carry fracked gas from Delaware into Maryland. The seven miles of the "Del-Mar" Pipeline that would be built in Maryland would connect with a separate 11-mile pipeline proposed by Chesapeake Utilities. The main purpose of the Chesapeake Utilities project is to provide gas to two state facilities—the Eastern Correctional Institute and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Chesapeake Utilities and ESNG, a Chesapeake Utilities subsidiary, are each proposing to run utilities into state-owned property. As such, it is our understanding and strong hope that the Board of Public Works will have an opportunity to weigh in on these two controversial proposals.

Given that Maryland has banned fracking, it defies our state's existing energy policy to bring the same public health risks to our residents by way of pipelines. Moreover, enabling fossil fuel production runs counter to our state's goals of increasing renewable energy production. We are appalled that the request for proposals put out by the State of Maryland to repower the university and prison foreclosed the possibility of clean energy by only requesting applications for gas. We are equally angered that this proposal to repower with dangerous fracked gas is being touted as a "clean alternative".

The construction and operation of the Del-Mar Pipeline would impact 1,239 square feet of streams and over 16,000 square feet of wetlands in Maryland. ESNG plans to install its pipeline through at least one older, forested wetland that is vulnerable to construction-related impacts using the destructive "open trench" method of construction. While the specifics of the 11-mile Chesapeake Utilities pipeline are not yet known, we anticipate similar impacts to our regional water resources.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland has been called "ground zero" for sea level rise due to climate change. We are at particular risk due to the Shore's ongoing land subsidence and our long shorelines and low-lying areas. Much of Maryland's 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline are found on the Eastern Shore, which, according to the latest science, will experience near daily flooding by 2100. We are concerned about the wisdom of investing in pipelines that will lock us into decades of reliance on fossil fuels that contribute to climate change.

In addition to violating the spirit of our renewable energy portfolio and fracking ban, the ENSG and Chesapeake Utilities pipelines would also directly endanger public health. We are concerned that we are being asked to put our environment and public health at risk for a pipeline that we may not have use for in the near future as our state and the country moves towards clean energy.

We strongly urge the Board of Public Works to reject these proposals.

Sincerely,

Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
Manokin River Keepers
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Parkertown Car Care
Maryland Chapter, Lower Eastern Shore Sierra Club
Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter
Earthworks
Talbot County Hunger Coalition
Lower Shore Progressive Caucus
Audubon Maryland-DC
Queen Anne's Conservation Association
Ridge to Reefs
Talbot Preservation Alliance
Assateague Coastal Trust
Organization of Environmental States
Wicomico Environmental Trust
ShoreRivers
Howard County Climate Action
Calvert Citizens for a Healthy Community
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter Veterans for Peace
Clean Air Prince Georges
Wicomico Interfaith Alliance
Wicomico County Creekwatchers
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist
Church
Indivisible Howard County
Harford County Climate Action
The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Cecil Solidarity