

Township of West Milford

Passaic County, New Jersey

~ Resolution 2012 - 068 ~

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, STATE OF NEW JERSEY EXPRESSING LOCAL CONCERNS RELATED TO THE TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE EXTENSION PROJECT

WHEREAS, Tennessee Gas Pipeline has submitted plans to various Federal and State agencies for the installation of a gas pipeline traversing various municipalities and counties in northern New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, certain components of this project have been completed to date including installation of a gas pipeline in New Jersey traversing 15 miles from Vernon in Sussex County through West Milford in Passaic County; and

WHEREAS, on January 19, 2012 the New Jersey Highlands Council voted to delay action on extending the pipeline another 7.6 miles into Mahwah in Bergen County; and

WHEREAS, at the public hearing held on that evening, several New Jersey residents, including residents from West Milford, expressed concerns about this project; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council tabled voting on the plan for 30 days to gather more information; and

WHEREAS, the Township of West Milford, its representatives and its citizens, are uniquely qualified to provide such information because that section of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline project that directly affects West Milford has been completed; and

WHEREAS, the West Milford Governing Body, their appointees to various boards & committees, the citizens of this community and the residents who live along the route of this pipeline received countless assurances in innumerable meetings and forums from representatives of Tennessee Gas Pipeline and their parent company, El Paso that the environmental, practical and financial impact of this project would either be minimal or advantageous to the community; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of West Milford does acknowledge that the staff, representatives and contractors who work for Tennessee Gas Pipeline have been responsive and responsible with regard to issues that arose as this project was being completed; and

WHEREAS, the positive responses do not negate the fact that serious issues did arise that continue to affect this community; and

WHEREAS, the positive responses do not negate the fact that assurances provided that all care would be given to guarantee that the financial and environmental impact of this project would be minimal to the natural resources of this rural community were of little substance; and

WHEREAS, the reality of the project is that significant areas of trees and forests were felled to facilitate the work to install the pipeline; and

WHEREAS, at best the contractors engaged in minimal efforts to abate the effect of such disturbance on the local environment be it land, water or animal; and

WHEREAS, homeowners and lake associations along the path of the project have borne the burdens associated with soil runoff, undermining of local roadways, traffic congestion, noise and emotional angst related to possible affects on local water resources; and

WHEREAS, while local officials reluctantly endorsed this project, such endorsement was proffered with the understanding that failure to do so would negatively affect the community and that the project would proceed with or without local support because of Federal approvals already granted; and

WHEREAS, from the very beginning local officials railed against the loss of local autonomy with regard to this project as a result of the mandates and edicts that were foisted upon the local government by federal and state agencies who approved this significant project without any regard for the impact on the residents of this municipality.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of West Milford that they do hereby strongly recommend that any further federal and/or state approvals, including Highlands Council approvals, be withheld until each community that has already been affected by the pipeline project, including West Milford Township, is restored. Such restoration shall include that all disturbed lands are stabilized, all roads are repaired, and all bodies of water are cleaned and runoff dredged at no cost to the affected communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of West Milford recommends that all federal and state agencies and authorities who will hear applications from Tennessee Gas Pipeline, its parent company or subsidiaries, develop a mechanism for each individual community that will be affected by the construction so that concerns can be addressed and policies put in place to provide protections for the communities and environments that will be intimately affected by the project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of West Milford hereby expresses support and empathy for local communities who have lost local autonomy over projects approved by federal and state agencies.

Adopted: February 1, 2012

Adopted this 1st of February, 2012
and certified as a true copy of an original.

Antoinette Battaglia, Township Clerk