



New Jersey Highlands Coalition May Update

Conformance

At the Highlands Council meeting scheduled for May 19th, four towns, Franklin (Warren County), Holland, Washington (Morris) and Kinnelon will have conformance petitions considered by the Council; three of the four are conforming BOTH their Planning and Preservation Areas, Franklin is the exception.

NJDEP Waiver Rule

Earlier this month, we commented at DEP's hearing on its proposed Waiver Rule, which would allow DEP to waive any regulation if an applicant can claim a regulation is unduly burdensome, or it is in conflict with any other State regulation. We were joined with many other organizations, including the entire environmental community, in vehemently opposing this rule. We are watching carefully how DEP will move forward.

Susquehanna to Roseland Power Line

On April 27th, we commented at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hearing at the Pequest Fish Hatchery in Oxford on EPA's response to DEP's petition that EPA enforce relevant sections of the Clean Air Act against the Portland Generating Station in Pennsylvania. The plant is a documented source of dangerous levels of sulfur dioxide and mercury in northwestern New Jersey. The EPA and DEP are finally taking appropriate action to force the facility to clean up its act or shut down. We applauded DEP for leading the charge-but we also made the point that they should be equally concerned with the plants that are hooked in with the "super-highway" for bringing dirty coal to lucrative eastern markets, the Susquehanna to Roseland Power Line.

We have been granted intervener status along with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and the Sierra Club, represented by the Columbia Environmental Law Clinic by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company's filing with the agency for its Northeast Upgrade Project pipeline.

The Eastern Environmental Law Center, representing the Coalition, NJ Environmental Federation and NJ Sierra, filed an appeal with NJ Superior Court this week challenging NJBPU's approval of the Susquehanna to Roseland Power Line.

Highlands Council Nominees

Last Thursday was a busy day in Trenton. We testified at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing against Governor Christie's anti-Highlands nominees to the Highlands Council-Robert G. Walton and James Rilee.

Robert Walton was [quoted](#) in the Hunterdon County Democrat as saying that he is "diametrically opposed to the Highlands Act" and posted on his [Facebook page](#) that he hopes the "...Highlands is scrapped". Clearly, he is not an appropriate choice to serve on the Highlands Council. Jim Rilee, Mayor of Roxbury, is often quoted in [meeting minutes](#) expressing his contempt for an overreaching Highlands Act and irritation at the meddling by the Highlands Council.

The Committee recognized the validity of our concerns and any decision on Rilee was postponed pending a further interview by the Committee. In a sharply divided vote however, Walton's nomination was approved by the Committee. It will be considered by the full Senate later this month. We are reaching out to members of the Senate and Senate leadership in order to block Walton's final approval on the Senate floor.

We supported the nomination to Morristown Mayor Tim Dougherty to the Council. His nomination was approved by the Committee.

In other action in Trenton, we testified last week at a Senate/Assembly Joint Environmental Committee hearing on the status of the Highlands Act. We were joined by many other supporters of the Highlands Act.

Honeywell in Morris Township

We are supporting our member organization, Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township, to oppose the plan by Honeywell to develop a 250-room hotel, 313 townhouses and condominium units, plus an increase to its office space on its park-like campus in Morris Township. The development would be an inappropriately intensive use in a quiet residential area that is already overly congested with pass-through road traffic. There are no amenities or services in the area, making the many new residents entirely car dependant. The plan has received preliminary approval by the Township Planning Board.

Upcoming Events

Save the date for the "Coal Free Flotilla", a canoe trip, on June 4 at 1pm, on the Delaware River between the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area and the GenOn Power Plant in Portland, PA sponsored by us and other members of the MAPLE Coalition, to rally support for clean energy alternatives to dirty coal and the cumulative impacts of dirty coal pollution that is supported by the Susquehanna to Roseland Power Line project. More details to be announced.

Also, for up to date listings of Highlands-wide events, go to the "Highlands Events" section of our website.