

## West Amwell Township Master Plan Excerpts and Conflicts with the DEIS

### Conservation Plan Element

*It is also important to understand the relationship between conservation and environmental measures and the specific purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law. For example some of the stated purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law provide:*

- a. To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use of or development of all lands in the state, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare.*
- b. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic, and other natural and man-made disasters.*

The proposed PE pipeline does not promote public health, safety, morals and general welfare for West Amwell residents. Quite the opposite. And it does not secure safety from fire, flood, panic, and other natural and man-made disasters. None of this is addressed in the DEIS.

*West Amwell's land use policies are largely driven by two factors. One is its rural character. The other is its unique environmental features, particularly due to its geologic, hydrologic and soils conditions. These factors serve as severe constraints on land development.*

### Geology - Diabase

In table G-3 of the DEIS – “Areas where Blasting May be Required” and under the subheading of “Shallow Bedrock with Potential to Require Blasting”, the answer is yes to blasting for every lateral and mainline location from milepost 0.17 to milepost 114.53.

In West Amwell Township, much of the proposed pipeline route is underlain with diabase. Blasting through the hard, dense diabase rock formations of West Amwell during pipeline construction will seriously cause these fractures to shift and/or be blocked. Our wells and our water supply will be seriously impacted. An explosion of the pipeline would destroy the wells and water supply of the residents of the Township both nearby and at a distance, as these fractures containing groundwater can travel for a great distance.

Blasting will not just affect wells within 150 feet of the blast area. The DEIS makes no mention of the impacts on the wells outside of 150 feet or wells within miles of the blast.

There is absolutely no evidence supplied by PennEast that the proposed pipeline will not negatively impact drinking water supplies and wells.

From the Sourland Conservancy: “Fracturing of bedrock would be limited to within several feet of the pipeline trench.” PennEast cannot be serious about this. Any geologist could tell them (and several have done so) that the interconnected fractures and rock structures are such that blasting can have a chain reaction effect that goes for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of feet in all directions. The DEIS also states that “blasting charges would be limited to that needed to

fracture rock to the required trench depth, and fracturing of bedrock would therefore be limited to within a few feet of the pipeline trench.” ??????????

### **Geology - Lockatong, Passiac, and Stockton formations**

Arsenic contamination of drinking water is not properly addressed in the DEIS.

### **Soils**

*In 2006, the Township enacted an updated soil management and removal ordinance to support the planning objectives of protecting the natural environment, preserving farmland and respecting the carrying capacity and constraints of the land. The purpose of this ordinance is to protect soil as a necessary and valuable resource in the Township.*

The DEIS claims that PennEast would minimize soil compaction and rutting, erosion, impacts on prime farmland and that potential impacts on soils would be avoided or effectively minimized or mitigated. There are no explanations as to how this would be accomplished.

### **Open Space Plan**

*A primary planning goal is to preserve the rural character and the sense of community that define West Amwell Township, while also safeguarding environmental and historic resources. The Township recognizes the benefits of open space and farmland preservation on the Township's rural community character as well as its tax base.*

*In concert with the overall goal of conservation and preservation of open space, a multipurpose greenway system should be considered. Establishment of a greenway system along with Sourland Ridge should be encouraged.*

The DEIS/proposed pipeline violates the integrity of the Sourland Ridge, preserved Open Space, and preserved Farmland. This is obvious!

### **Woodlands**

*When trees are removed, it invariably leads to rapid degradation of water resources through increased runoff and lost recharge. Reduction in the "tree canopy" also has an immediate effect on other important parts of the forest including the loss of diverse animal habitat and impacts on under-story plants. To protect the Township's environmentally sensitive areas that are so important to our overall quality of life, it is a goal of this Master Plan to maintain woodlands and forests in West Amwell in their current contiguous state in order to preserve the high quality environmental functions that they currently perform.*

PennEast claims they are minimizing the fragmentation of large contiguous forest stands and the associated edge effects by locating the pipeline adjacent to existing ROWs.

The particular route through the Sourland Ridge will way more than double the existing ROW, with obvious consequences on the fragmented forests and their residents.

### **Wetlands**

NJDEP wetland mapping indicates that 1,146 acres of wetlands exist in West Amwell Township, with a large portion in the Sourland Mountain. Yet, the DEIS states that the final delineation of wetlands is incomplete and there is no mitigation plan.

### **Stream corridor protection**

*The protection of stream corridors is a particularly important goal in the Township of West Amwell. Due to the Township's unique geology and character it is critical that such areas are given priority for preservation and protection. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 2005 reclassified Alexauken Creek as a Category 1 stream, conveying the most stringent protections from degradation of water quality. In addition, the adoption of the Township Stream Corridor Ordinance in 2005 preserves woodlands in stream buffers that serve important environmental functions such as protecting plant and animal habitat and erosion prevention, among others benefits.*

The DEIS does not address the fact that the high pressure pipeline would further exacerbate the temperature impairment of the Alexauken Creek, nor does it address the pipelines' impact on the potential contamination of the public water supply as the Alexauken Creek is a tributary to the Delaware River.

The preferred PennEast route is slated to go under the Alexauken Creek, and yet the DEIS indicates that there is no information on geotechnical investigation on the site. From the DEIS:

TABLE 4.1.7-1

Status of Geotechnical Investigations for HDD Locations

99.7-100.9 Alexauken Creek Hunterdon Not Started

### **Sustainability Plan Element**

*This Environmental Sustainability Plan Element of the Master Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (M.L.U.L.). NJ.S.A. 40:55D-28a and provides*

*that the Planning Board "may prepare and, after public hearing, adopt or amend a master plan or component parts thereof, to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare." The purpose of the Sustainability Plan Element is to recommend goals, policies and strategies to protect natural resources and to create a healthy and sustainable economy and society.*

## **Land Use Plan Element**

*Development of the land places an impact on the surrounding environment. Establishing sustainable design objectives to guide development, preservation and restoration practices will limit environmental impact. Agricultural lands, open spaces, soils, and greenways then have the opportunity to become productive landscapes for people and for wildlife. Land use shall be determined by the ability to sustain resources and the environment and preserve the water quality and quantity.*

## **Recreation Plan Element**

*Parks and Open Space serve as recreational centers as well as function within the "green infrastructure" system. Green infrastructure refers to the systems of open space, stream corridors, wetlands, forests, and natural habitats which enhance West Amwell by serving as recreational assets, providing habitat for wildlife, improving storm water quality and diminishing the negative effects of flooding. Green infrastructure provides for recreation, while at the same time protecting and restoring sensitive habitats, expanding wildlife corridors, and improving the overall livability of the Township.*

## **Historic Preservation Element**

*The Municipal Land Use Law authorizes preparation of a Historic Plan Element and provides that"... (a) indicating the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts; (b) identifying the standard uses to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification; and (c) analyzing the impact of each component and element of the Master Plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts."*

*Important historic sites and locations have been identified in the Township. Preservation of these sites shall consider sustainable design options in the restoration of existing historic resources, while committing to maintain the true historic aspect of such resources. Historic preservation is important to the character of West Amwell.*

The proposed pipeline runs through several master plan designated historic sites. I can't find a proper map, but as far as I do know, the following properties will be impacted: Block 3, Lot 16, Lambert Farm, Block 3, Lot 15, Magill.

## **Farmland Preservation Element**

*Sustainable agriculture helps to maintain a positive balance and productivity of the land ensuring healthy farmland for this and subsequent generations, thus ensuring the environmental health of the Township and economic profitability for farming operations. West Amwell has an agricultural land base that protects the community rural character while promoting the industry of farming. The overall goal of the Farmland Preservation Element is to support a profitable and sustainable agricultural sector that seeks to assure a healthy farm landscape and provide access to fresh, local foods.*

The proposed pipeline traverses preserved farmland. I don't have a readable map, but as far as I know: Block 3 lot 16 preserved Lambert Farm, Block 8, Lots 36 and 20 preserved Toll South (now Walters), and probably Block 5 Lot 24.01, Toll North (now T&T).