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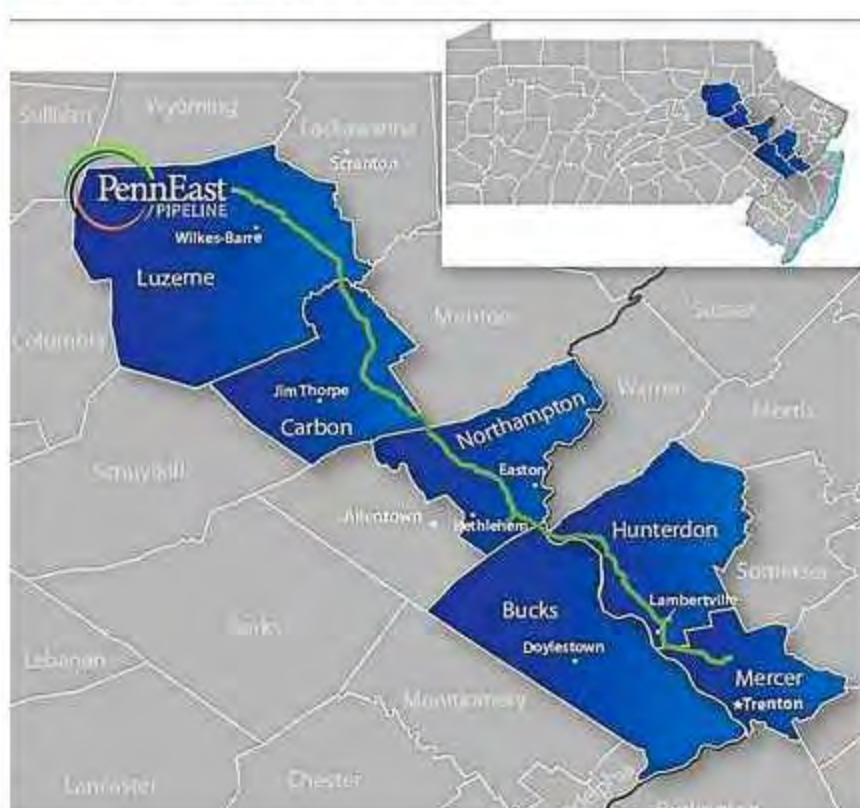
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Energy and the environment

http://www.trentonian.com/environment-and-nature/20160926/environmental-group-opposes-penneast-pipeline-despite-route-modifications

Environmental group opposes PennEast Pipeline despite route modifications



PennEast Pipeline Co. has proposed to construct a 120-mile-long underground natural gas transmission line that would stretch from Dallas Township in Pennsylvania to Hopewell Township in New Jersey.

Graphic Courtesy of PennEast Pipeline Co. LLC

By Sulaiman Abdur-Rahman, The Trentonian

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UPDATED: 4 HRS AGO

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HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP >> In response to public feedback over environmental concerns, PennEast Pipeline Co. has studied and filed 33 minor alternatives or "route deviations" to its proposed 120-mile-long, underground natural gas transmission line from Pennsylvania into New Jersey.

"The route modifications further minimize environmental impacts through optimized co-location with existing electric transmission lines, wildlife habitat avoidance and reduced tree clearing," PennEast said in a news release.

Of the 33 deviations, 26 are in Pennsylvania and seven are in New Jersey, including one in Hopewell Township that "minimizes impacts to the landowner's hops fields" by moving the proposed pipeline into existing building setbacks, according to documents PennEast filed last week with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

PennEast said the latest modifications to its proposed pipeline route would reduce permanent impacts on forested wetlands by 64 percent and reduce impacts to endangered species, including a known salamander habitat in Delaware Township in Hunterdon County.

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Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, issued a statement Monday saying "this pipeline is still a disaster" despite PennEast making changes to its proposed route.

"PennEast is making these changes because they want to get around certain environmental regulations and permit requirements," Tittel said. "They are trying to dodge some of the opposition, but these changes are not about making the pipeline better or safer. This project is still unneeded and unnecessary. By changing the proposed route, now PennEast Pipeline are threatening new environmentally sensitive areas and public safety of

other communities. These changes are just a window dressing on a terrible project that will cause irreparable harm to the Delaware River Valley."

PennEast spokeswoman Patricia Kornick on Monday said the company's route modifications were made "in response to constructive feedback."

"PennEast is listening," she said. "It is in response to constructive feedback. It is being responsive, and we want to continue to be responsive, and we will continue to work with landowners and other stakeholders."

Peter Terranova, chair of the PennEast board of managers, in a statement said the route modifications represent "a win-win in PennEast's continued effort to balance environmental protection with the need for affordable natural gas that will power the region's future."

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, also known as FERC, is expected to make a decision sometime between mid-December and early next year on whether to approve or deny PennEast's application to build, own and operate a 120-mile-long pipeline. It would cost PennEast upward of \$1 billion to construct the pipeline that would stretch from Dallas Township in Pennsylvania to Hopewell Township in New Jersey.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sulaiman Abdur-Rahman has been working as a professional journalist since graduating from Temple University in 2007. Prior to his current stint at The Trentonian, Abdur-Rahman worked at The Philadelphia Inquirer and wrote a self-published memoir about his 12-month experience of living in Australia on a spouse visa. Reach the author at sulaiman@trentonian.com or follow Sulaiman on Twitter: @sabdurr.

Full bio and more articles by Sulaiman Abdur-Rahman

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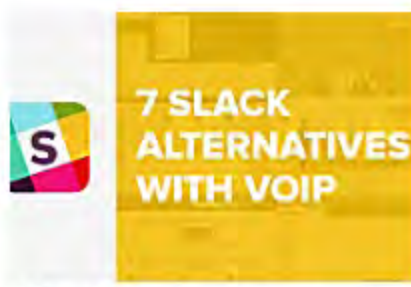
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