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## MAILBAG: Pipeline's effects on air, water should sink it with NY state

Mar 29, 2017



On April 7, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation will decide on the air and water certification for National Fuel's Northern Access pipeline. Will the Pendleton Action Team and the rest of Niagara County be able to breathe a sigh of relief? Or will they know that the air they breathe will soon be tainted with fracking contaminants?

Northern Access is being built to move natural gas from hydrofracking fields in Pennsylvania for export to Canada. Based on precedent, this should be an easy decision for the DEC. The air and water permit for a similar pipeline proposal from eastern Pennsylvania to Albany was denied last year. In addition, Governor Cuomo stated in his State of the State address that New York State must "double down by investing in the fight against dirty fossil fuels and fracked gas from neighboring states to achieve the goals outlined in the Clean Energy Standard."

The construction of nearly 100 miles of new pipeline through sensitive wetlands and stream crossings should be enough to doom the project for the water certification. But, National Fuel has downplayed the potential effects of the proposed dehydration station in Wheatfield, as well as the compressor station in Pendleton, in an attempt to pass the air certification. Carcinogens, including benzene and toluene, will be in the exhaust from these stations and will be airborne for up to 10 miles. Additionally, other chemicals like hydrogen sulfide and formaldehyde will raise asthma rates in the region.

The decision from the DEC will be a signal as to which set of environmental rules will be followed in New York state. Will we follow the 2016 Cuomo rules or the 2017 Trump rules? May the DEC remember that they are named the Department of Environmental Conservation when they make their decision.

**John S. Szalasny, Amherst**

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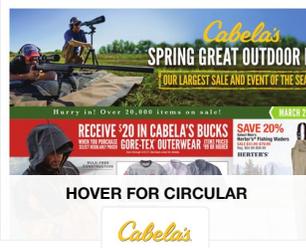
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