

THE COUNTY OF CHESTER

CHESTER COUNTY
WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY
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September 29, 2014

Ms. Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A
Washington, D.C. 20426

Re: OEP/DG2E/Gas 1
Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC
East Side Expansion Project
Docket No. CP14-17-000

Dear Ms. Bose:

The Chester County Water Resources Authority (CCWRA) appreciates the opportunity to provide the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with comments on the *East Side Expansion Project Environmental Assessment*. CCWRA is a county-wide municipal authority established by the Chester County Board of Commissioners to serve as the County's flood control and water resources management agency. CCWRA is responsible for numerous aspects of water resources management, planning, monitoring, facilities operation, technical guidance, and scientific investigations regarding all aspects of water resources management, and particularly those within the Brandywine Creek watershed.

CCWRA also represents the County on review and coordination of inter-jurisdictional water resources issues affecting Chester County. Further, CCWRA is responsible for development and implementation of "*Watersheds- An Integrated Water Resources Management Plan for Chester County, PA and Its Watersheds*", which was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as a part of the *County-wide Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for Chester County, PA*. In addition, all Chester County municipalities have adopted stormwater ordinances that meet or exceed the standards set by the *County-wide Act 167 Plan*. The *County-wide Act 167 Plan* serves to ensure sound strategies and priorities are employed to ensure effective stormwater management for new development and re-development projects, balance water resources stewardship, public safety, and growth management needs of the County and its constituents. *Watersheds*, our county-wide water resources plan, was adopted in 2002 by the Chester County Board of Commissioners as a component of Chester County's comprehensive land use plan *Landscapes*

CCWRA also serves as the local instream flow management coordinator for the Brandywine Creek watershed working with water suppliers who operate continuous withdrawals from the Brandywine, owners of three regional water supply reservoirs, regulatory agencies, and United States Geological

Survey who maintain an extensive stream gaging network within the Brandywine Creek to monitor interstate flows for use in making reservoir releases and flood response decisions.

Given these roles, CCWRA has reviewed the *East Side Expansion Project Environmental Assessment* (referred to herein as the “EA”) and respectfully submits the following comments regarding the Chester County portion of the pipeline expansion and requests they be addressed prior to approval of the project by FERC.

1. CCWRA strongly supports all comments submitted by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) (letter dated September 29, 2014, from Mr. Ronald Bailey) and requests all CCPC comments be addressed prior to approval by FERC.
2. CCWRA strongly supports all comments submitted in the Chester County Conservation District’s (CCCD) Technical Deficiency Letter (dated September 9, 2014) and requests all CCCD comments be addressed prior to approval by FERC.
3. In early 2014, FEMA provided Chester County with a revised GIS flood layer. If this layer is not currently in use, it is strongly recommended that the applicant contact the Chester County Department of Computer Information Services to obtain the latest GIS FEMA flood layer for Chester County. FEMA is currently developing new detailed watershed analyses and flood-risk mapping for the Brandywine Creek watershed and anticipates providing draft materials for public review in 2016.
4. CCWRA strongly supports additional short term and long term protective measures for the project areas involving steep slopes and in areas where the potential for landslides is a concern. The Christina Brandywine watershed has impaired streams and a sediment and nutrient TMDL in place.
5. CCWRA strongly supports a more thorough assessment of the effect of flooding and flash flooding to the Chester County community. The section in the EA on flash flooding discusses the effect of floods on the lasting integrity of the pipeline project, however it does not evaluate if or how the project construction might affect downstream reaches and community during flooding.
6. CCWRA requests more details regarding the groundwater hazards and risks to groundwater quality and nearby wells that exist in several areas along or adjacent to Line 1278 Loop. There was only a brief mention and no details were given to comment on.
7. CCWRA strongly support FERC’s recommendation and request that it become a requirement that Columbia conduct pre-and post- construction monitoring of well yield and water quality for all private wells within 150 ft of pipeline construction. However this monitoring distance should be significantly expanded for blasting. For this proposed project in Chester County, 17 groundwater wells are located within 150 feet of the project workspace, 6 of which are within 25 feet just beyond the workspace. It is unclear what is meant by Columbia “will provide a temporary source of water and /or compensate the owner” as a result of drilling or blasting and this would seem insufficient should a groundwater well be compromised.
8. The project proposes potential blasting in several areas, including areas in the vicinity of public and private water supply wells. The EA and blasting plan should also specify that the applicant will coordinate with the Chester County Health Department to obtain information regarding existing public and private water supply wells and to coordinate and review contingency plans for restoring damaged water supplies. Columbia should notify owners of any dams located within a half mile of the blasting locations and if necessary monitor those dams during blasting.

9. CCWRA supports the requirement that the applicant must implement an environmental complaint resolution procedure, including a process that Columbia must adhere to in order to address the complaints.
10. Downingtown Municipal Water Authority (DMWA) operates an intake on the Brandywine Creek that is downstream of the proposed work on the Brandywine Creek. During even routine construction, a pulse of elevated suspended solids flowing downstream could force DMWA to close its intake and shut down water production for the region. The applicant should reach agreement with DMWA to establish advanced contact and coordination to insure the water withdrawals by DMWA are not affected by turbidity from the project. The applicant should establish a schedule of advanced notification of instream activities to DMWA and other downstream water suppliers.
11. CCWRA requests that details be provided regarding the final wetland mitigation project site(s) and plans in the Brandywine-Christina Watershed. Without the proposed mitigation site and project details provided, comments cannot be provided.
12. In addition to the required monitoring of the disturbed areas to determine the post-construction re-vegetative success, there should be a clear written description of the term “re-vegetative success” that Columbia will be held to.
13. CCWRA recommends that greater detail of the location of the septic systems be established. The EA plan sheets indicated the locations of existing septic systems within the proposed project area with general symbology.
14. CCWRA recommends contingency plans should be presented describing how impacted septic systems will be remedied.
15. The project proposes clear-cutting and removal of extensive tree canopy in terrestrial and steep slope areas, and within riparian corridors (considered to be the land within 100 feet of any bank of a stream or water body). Tree removal should be avoided in every place possible to minimize increased flooding, terrestrial and instream erosion and sedimentation, loss of nutrient pollutant removal, stream bank erosion, and thermal stream pollution. If mature trees are replaced with shrubs and natural height vegetation, additional post-construction stormwater management criteria will be needed to compensate for the loss of critical runoff reduction that existing tree canopies currently provide in the Brandywine watershed. This is especially critical where tree removal will occur within the 100 foot riparian buffer on each side of a waterbody or where a canopy has been removed from steep slopes.
16. A detailed reforestation plan should be provided by the applicant for all areas where the project will remove trees outside of the actual pipeline corridor. The reforestation plan should specify sufficient size, type and protection of tree plantings and follow-up inspection and replacement by the applicant to assure at least 85% survival of plantings. This is particularly critical on steep slopes and within the 100-foot riparian corridors.
17. Riparian buffer areas should not be disturbed beyond the width of the corridor necessary for the pipe installation. To the maximum extent practicable, areas should not be located within the riparian corridors to avoid further damaging these critical buffer features.
18. Brandywine Creek is designated “High Quality” within the project area. Information should be provided indicating how water quality protection will be accomplished while conducting the project.

19. The management of the Brandywine Creek instream flows has not been adequately addressed. Three instream intakes are located in the Brandywine Creek downstream of the proposed project to provide public water supply. It is critical that adequate analysis has occurred on how the project operations will proceed during periods of low flow, drought, or large storm events. CCWRA recognizes that often construction work in streams is conducted in expected low flow periods such as the summer, however, low flows can and frequently do occur throughout the year in this watershed. In the fall of 2007, Chester County experienced a lengthy drought and the “Drought Watch” status was not lifted until January 2008. The instream flows of East Branch Brandywine Creek are heavily regulated and carefully managed for supporting water supply withdrawals in Chester County, PA and New Castle/Wilmington County, DE. Instream flow management regulatory protocols have been established by PADEP and Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) and must be adhered to for all water supply withdrawals. During periods of low flow, water supply releases are made from Marsh Creek Reservoir (upstream of project crossing of the Brandywine) to support withdrawals by Downingtown Municipal Water Authority (intake just south of Route 30 bypass), Aqua PA (West Chester intake), and City of Wilmington. Information should be provided explaining how the project will avoid disrupting instream flows which may affect water supply withdrawals and aquatic habitat during periods of low-flow.
20. Information should be provided explaining how the Brandywine Creek stream crossing activities will be protected from severe flooding. This reach of Brandywine Creek is protected by three upstream regional flood control dams, but remains subject to rapidly rising and severe flood levels. CCWRA recommends that the applicant and its inspectors stay informed of daily weather events and upstream stream flows, and have contingency plans in place for implementation during severe weather events, including over weekends when limited staff may be available during a storm event. CCWRA suggests that referencing United States Geologic Survey (USGS) stream gaging stations on the Brandywine Creek will provide excellent data to determine low flow and flood threshold analyses and to help make daily decisions. The applicant must remain aware – at all times - of local hydrological conditions to help safely manage the construction activities and avoid negatively affecting the instream flows and sensitive resources.
21. The EA indicates that the applicant will be discharging the water used in the hydrostatic testing back onto well-vegetated upland area adjacent to the right-of-way. While the return of flow to the stream from which it is withdrawn is important, information should be provided indicating what if any water quality and thermal impacts may occur from internal pipe residues, chemicals or metals from the hydrostatic testing, and what measures will be taken to insure the discharge rate does not create instream turbidity or erosion conditions. We strongly recommend that the applicant alert CCWRA and all downstream water providers at least 24 hours in advance of discharge operations. Information should be provided as to the locations where discharges will occur.
22. No detailed drawings were provided for review regarding steep slope sections, wetland and waterbody crossings and staging areas. This information is needed to complete our review.
23. All work at stream banks and within stream channels should be conducted to insure that stable stream channel processes and geomorphology conditions will remain during and after completion of construction. CCWRA recommends follow-up monitoring of streambank stability where stream crossings occurred by the applicant and where necessary stream channel/bank restoration or repair be conducted.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. CCWRA is willing to meet with FERC and/or the applicant to provide relevant information and to discuss the above comments.

Sincerely,



Janet L. Bowers, P.G.
Executive Director

- cc: Chester County Commissioner
Mark Rupsis, Chester County Commissioners Office
Chester County Planning Commission
Chester County Conservation District
Chester County Facilities & Parks Department
Caln Township
Downingtown Borough
East Brandywine Township
Upper Uwchlan Township
Uwchlan Township
West Vincent Township
West Bradford Township