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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ
7TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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August 16th, 2025

Cheryl A Sandrow
NYSDEC - Division of Environmental Permits
625 Broadway, 4th Fl
Albany, NY 12233-1750

RE: Application ID 2-9902-00209/00009 WQC

Dear Ms. Sandrow,

As the representative of New York's 7th Congressional District, I submit this comment letter on behalf of my constituents and environmental justice advocates concerned about the revival of the proposed Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) Project, which if advanced will be the biggest fracked gas pipeline approved in New York state in a decade.¹

Many of the concerns echo those outlined years ago in a May 2019 letter to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sent by members of New York City's congressional delegation. In that letter we detailed the substantial environmental and climate risks posed by this project. Unfortunately, these risks remain, and in many cases have only grown more pressing, as we witness the rollback of key federal investments that prioritize protecting our environment and building out our country's clean energy infrastructure.

As you know, the NESE project, proposed by Williams Transco, would extend the Transco natural gas pipeline system to bring fracked gas from Pennsylvania through New Jersey and beneath the NY/NJ Harbor, threatening sensitive marine habitats and undermining New York's leading climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act of 2019, which requires New York State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030, and 85 percent by 2050, from 1990 levels.

In 2020, the NYSDEC rejected the Water Quality Certificate for the pipeline expansion because it found that construction beneath the sea floor would dig up and release contaminants such as

¹ *Major Pipeline Moves Closer to Approval in New York as Critics Decry 'Bargain' with Trump*, New York Focus (Aug. 8, 2025), <https://nysfocus.com/2025/08/08/donald-trump-new-york-hochul-pipeline-fossil-fuel-offshore-williams-constitutionnd>.

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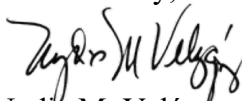
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mercury and copper, as well as arsenic, silver, nickel, lead, zinc, PCB, and dioxin/furan.² The listed contaminants have adverse effects on marine life (whales, seals, dolphins), many of which have started to return to the waters of New York City. Exposure to these toxins can also negatively impact human health. Moreover, the fracked gas process is very destructive to the environment and water tables from the source, and we should not be facilitating that exploitation with additional pipelines.

At a time when the federal government is embracing the oil and gas industry at the expense of community health and our environment, it is critical that states like New York remain steadfast in its commitment to preserving our marine life, water quality, and meeting necessary climate goals.

I strongly urge your department to closely evaluate the public comments in response to this proposed project and ensure that New York remains on a path to succeed in meeting our long-term climate goals and fairly protecting environmental justice communities despite actions at the federal level to undermine this work.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

²NYSDEC *WQC Denial for NESE Northeast Supply Enhancement Project*, (May 15, 2020), https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/permits_ej_operations_pdf/nese-wqc-denial05152020.pdf.