

Comments given on May 15th by Tom Torres (tom.torres@sierraclub.org) of the Sierra Club PA Chapter at the PA DEP Environmental Justice Listening Session in Lancaster:

*For the past two years, I've worked with communities along the proposed route of the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline. During that time, I watched community members — many who knew the project's docket better than I did — try to navigate an unwieldy permitting process at the state and federal level.*

*Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior, echoing the concerns of community members all across the state, expressed serious concerns about the project, citing inadequate information and a lack of sufficient public participation opportunities.*

*For example, Transco, the project's parent company, filed hundreds of pages of new information to the docket well after the close of the comment period. This information was not part of the public record and the public was not given an opportunity to properly review and comment on these filings.*

*Another example: the Public Notice for the Army Corps 404 permit violated public participation requirements by not including public access to the complete permit application.*

*Closer to home, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission held Transco's applications for several months, only publishing notice of them after the Draft EIS' comment period had passed.*

*These are just a few examples of an issue that was pervasive to this entire project. As you can see, the Atlantic Sunrise evaded the comprehensive environmental impact disclosure and public participation requirements of NEPA and we ask the PA DEP to ensure that this does not happen with future projects.*

*The DEP should do all in its power to ensure that the people of Pennsylvania have the information necessary for informed public comment and that timely and sufficient public participation opportunities are provided to the public.*

*The DEP must play an active role in coordinating between state and federal agencies to allow for transparency in decision-making, informed public comment, and comprehensive public participation as required by state law.*

*And finally, rather than simply fulfilling its administrative duties, the DEP should ensure that project reviews are consistent with the Environmental Rights Amendment, which states: the people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.*

*Thank you for your time.*