

Staff report from Lancaster DEP Hearing on Atlantic Sunrise Air Quality Plan Public Hearing
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I'm writing to share an inspiring action that took place the evening of Monday, August 14 in Lancaster, PA, relating to the proposed Atlantic Sunrise pipeline.



There have been incredible stories of opposition to this project, from the Lancaster [Stand](#) to the creation of a chapel in the pipeline path by [nuns](#) standing in opposition to the project. In particular, Mark and Malinda Clatterbuck, Tim Spiese, Ann Pinca, and Kate Ruof have been organizing and inspiring people to join this effort for years now. Additionally, Joanne Kilgour and Tom Torres, along with Tom Au, Diana Csank, and Elly Benson have been doing great work for the Sierra Club's efforts to support the community-driven opposition to the Atlantic Sunrise.

On Monday night, there was a public hearing for the Air Quality Plan to address impacts from construction on the pipeline in Lancaster County. Lancaster County is in nonattainment under the Clean Air Act for NOx, and Lancaster city has the dubious recognition of having the [20th](#) worst air quality of any city in the country. Despite all this, Transco is planning on adding 105 tons of NOx to Lancaster's air throughout the construction of this fracked gas pipeline.

To control for this harm, Transco has expressed its intention to purchase offset credits from an already decommissioned facility in Hartford County, Maryland. This plan, and DEP's seeming support for it, was just another slap in the face for a community that has not been listened to for years.

Just like in many other pipeline fights across the country, the people most directly impacted seem to be those least prioritized through the decision-making process.

So, rather than participate in this sham of a hearing, the community groups decided to hold their own hearing outside. They registered early to ensure they had the first speaking position, and took that opportunity to outline the many failures of the permitting process up until that point. **And then on cue, everyone walked out.**

It really was one of the most powerful and inspiring actions I have ever seen in this work. We documented the entire event (including video) and walkout on the Sierra Club PA Chapter's [twitter feed](#).

This is what it looked like before and after:



Here is what we looked like outside:



The event got some great media coverage, and led on all of the local television news stations. Here's a few clips:

Pipeline protesters walk out of DEP hearing, calling it a 'sham':

<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2017/08/14/pipeline-protesters-walk-out-of-dep-hearing-calling-it-a-sham/>

Pipeline protesters wear masks, walk out of meeting: <http://www.wgal.com/article/pipeline-protesters-wear-masks-walk-out-of-meeting/12012791>

Dozens protest by walking out of DEP hearing on pipeline air quality plan:

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/08/dozens_protest_by_walking_out.html

Shout out to the PA Chapter, and particularly Conservation Chair Tom Au, for sending out an action alert for the hearing, helping to drive attendance from our members and supporters. Additional shout out to Board Member Robin Mann, who attended the hearing and participated in the action. Also, another shout out for Elly Benson, who has been drafting written comments on this flawed plan that we'll submit next week to PA DEP.