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Sustainable Saratoga Scoping Request regarding Oil Trains

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A company named Pilgrim pipeline has applied to construct, along the Thruway from Albany, a pipeline which would transport highly volatile Bakken crude oil to NJ refineries.

To supply this proposed pipeline with its capacity of 200,000 barrels per day would require that much more Bakken crude oil would have to be brought to Albany by rail... which would bring part of this increased number of oil trains, with their potential safety risks, right through Saratoga Springs.

It is important to note that, within the one-mile emergency evacuation zone of this rail route, Saratoga Springs has four public schools, Saratoga Hospital, Skidmore College and many city residences and businesses.

Sustainable Saratoga is concerned that this increase in potentially dangerous crude oil train traffic through our city and its potential impact on our safety have not been addressed in Pilgrim's application or in the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

We, at Sustainable Saratoga, will be identifying our concerns to the State agencies. We are also requesting that the City Council do the same.

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) allows "interested parties" (such as civic organizations and municipalities) to identify their concerns about potential adverse impacts of an action during the "scoping process" of the required environmental analysis.

It is not necessary for the City Council to take a position, at this time, for or against this pipeline application. This is merely asking the State's "lead agencies" evaluating the environmental impact of this project to add some questions specific to Saratoga Springs to the scope of their review.

Specifically, we are asking that the City Council participate in the SEQRA review at least to the extent of requesting that these issues be identified as part of the initial scoping process:

- A determination of the number of oil trains that will travel through Saratoga Springs in order to transport additional oil relating to the proposed pipeline;
- The nature and extent of the risk of these trains to the health and safety of Saratoga Springs residents;
- An evaluation of the safety of the tracks and other infrastructure as it relates to carrying heavy oil trains;
- Any other relevant health, safety or environmental issues which come to light.

It is not yet time to submit a scoping request but it is time sensitive.

When the lead agencies, the DEC and the Thruway Authority, open the window of opportunity to submit scoping requests, interested parties may have only 30 days in which to submit. This could happen at any time.

Because of this, Sustainable Saratoga brings this before you now so that, if you decide to submit a scoping request, it will be ready when the window opens.