

December 12, 2013

Mark Lohbauer  
Chair  
New Jersey Pinelands Commission  
15 Springfield Road  
New Lisbon, New Jersey 08064

Dear Chairman Lohbauer,

We are writing to express our concern with the pending proposal to approve a natural gas pipeline across the Pinelands Forest Area through an intergovernmental memorandum of agreement. We share a deep commitment to the Pinelands as one of New Jersey's most precious resources, and to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan as the nation's most successful program to save vulnerable natural resources in the context of a crowded and vibrant state. The current proposal would compromise the integrity of the Pinelands Plan and serve to encourage future development contrary to the vision the Plan sets out for growth and conservation in the Pinelands.

Having served in government, we understand the reasons that are presented, often compellingly, to waive environmental protections in what may seem at the time to be unique or extraordinary cases. We believe, however, that the Pinelands program will only work over the long term if the Plan is implemented consistently. Only then will utility companies, developers and others in government and industry form their own long-range plans to comply with the Pinelands vision. Indeed, the need to set out clear and stable guidance for infrastructure development such as pipelines was one of the principal motivations behind the Pinelands legislation and Plan. For these reasons, we urge the Commission to stick to the Plan in this case.

Sincerely,



Brenda T. Byrne



Thomas H. Kean



Christine Todd Whitman



James J. Florio