

CASE # 11-3534-GA-BTX 35

Olentangy River Wetland Advisory Committee

William H. Resch - Member

10055 Johnstown Road New Albany, Ohio 43054
Cell Tel. # 614-264-9778 Email: whresch@aol.com

December 1, 2011

Dear Mr. Snitcher,

I appeal to you to peruse the 22 support letters in the enclosed packet that exhibit local, state, national and international support to not expose The Ohio State University Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (OSU-ORWRP) to any risk from the Columbia Gas proposal to install a high pressure gas pipeline under this world renowned research facility. The current preferred gas line route plan is to traverse under the ODOT Mitigation Site of 12.5 acre Bottomland Forest and floodplain restoration that includes 2 acres of Federally Protected Jurisdictional Wetlands under the Clean Water Act, Section 404. ODOT impacted Scioto River Wetlands that were destroyed by the 1998 construction of the Spring - Sundusky Interchange and was permitted by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Ohio EPA to mitigate the impact by restoring the floodplain and creating wetlands on the OSU- ORWRP Bottomland Forest

My colleagues and I are not opposed, for any reason, to the necessity to upgrade and enlarge the existing natural gas line that traverses under the adjacent Union Cemetery. We highly recommend that Columbia Gas of Ohio reutilize the existing easement they own or pursue one of the other three alternative routes Columbia Gas proposed in 2008 or 2011. (See the attached aerial photo map)

Our concern is the initial risk of exposing the OSU Wetland Research Park to the risk of horizontal directional drilling (HDD), especially from what is termed a "FRAC-OUT" (not to be confused with the chemical extraction "Fracking" process). A FRAC-OUT is the higher risk to the integrity of the OSU Wetlands Research Studies than the long term risk of a high pressure gas pipeline located under the wetlands. It is my understanding that a Frac-Out is a failure or a seizure of the drilling equipment or a blockage that would occur under the bottomland forest wetlands and seepage to the surface of drilling fluids can occur. An event of this nature occurred this year in Westerville during a Horizontal Drilling under Alum Creek.

Finally, the OSU Wetland Research Park (ORWRP) is

- an ecological treasure and a highly productive grant and alumni donated (\$5,000,000 +) funded research site for 20 years.
- Ohio's only Ramsar Wetland Site of International Importance,
- the first winner of the Green Globe Award for the best wetland restoration in North America, designated by the World Wetland Network.
- its Director, Dr. William Mitsch, received the World Water Prize in Stockholm Sweden, for his pioneering research in Wetland Modeling.
- prized by other universities, in the United States and internationally, who seek guidance from Dr. Mitsch on how to replicate the OSU Wetland Research Park design and research productivity.

Your consideration of the above and the enclosed letters will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bill Resch

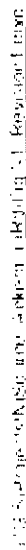
William H. Resch

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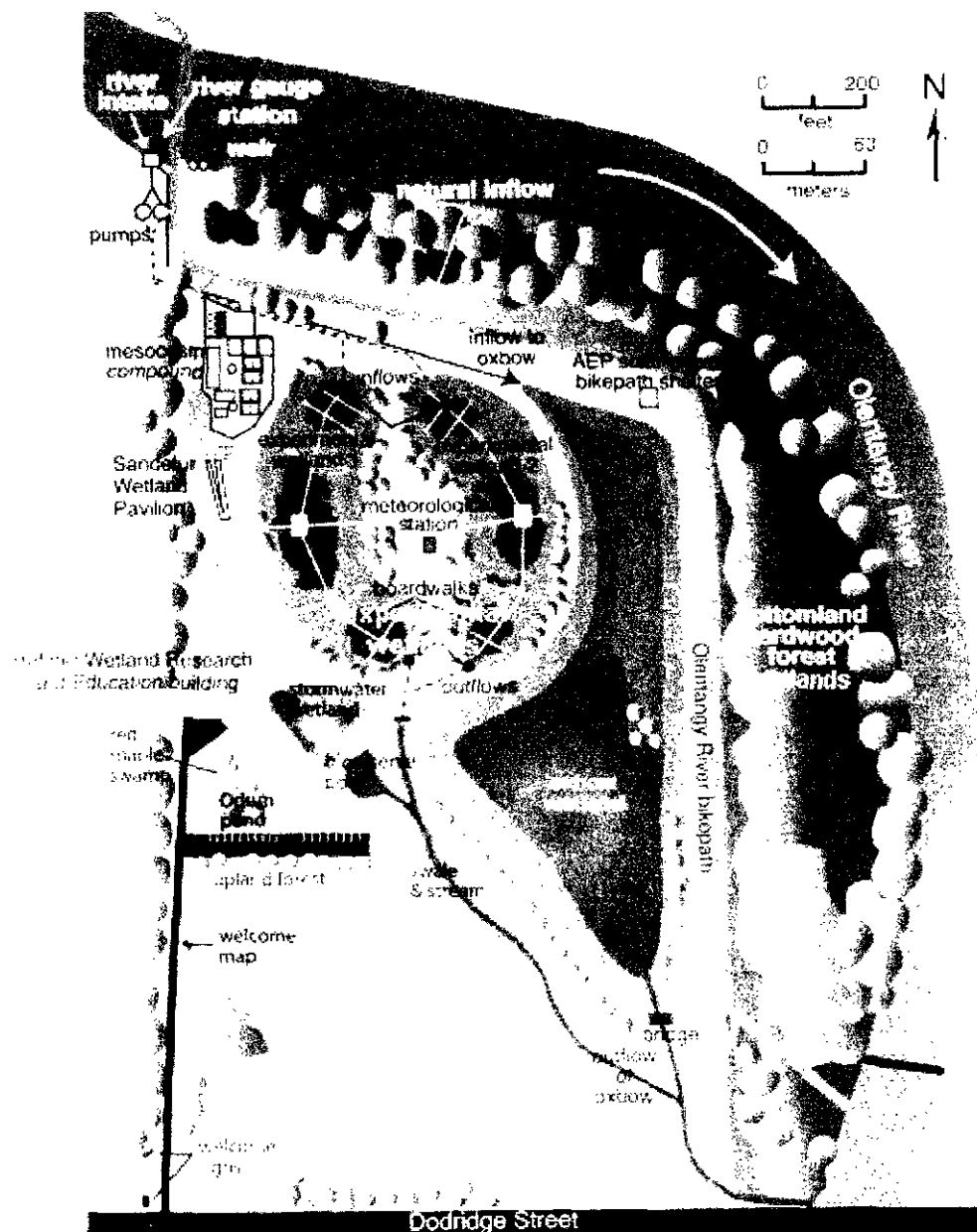
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Annotated overlay of original URS Map by Bill Resch, Member OSU-WRP Advisory Board

SUPPORT LETTERS TO HELP PROTECT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY'S RAMSAR DESIGNATED WETLAND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE



Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park
The Ohio State University



US National Ramsar Committee

<http://www.ramsarcommittee.us/>

c/o Professor Kim Diana Connolly
2011-2012 Chair
University at Buffalo Law School
519 O'Brian Hall, North Campus
Buffalo, NY 14260-1100
716/645-2092
kimconno@buffalo.edu

3 October 2011

Jay D. Kasey
Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning
The Ohio State University
101 Bricker Hall
190 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA

Re: Raising Concerns re Proposed Gas Lines under the Internationally- Designated Olentangy River Wetland Research Park

Dear Vice President Kasey,

I am writing to you today in my capacity as the Chair of the United States National Ramsar Committee (USNRC), an organization dedicated to supporting the goals and objectives of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands within the United States and internationally. The USNRC and Ramsar promote the conservation and wise, sustainable use of domestic and international wetlands.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on February 2, 1971. Over 150 countries, including the United States, are parties to the Ramsar Convention. One of the primary obligations of a Ramsar party is to designate sites as "Wetlands of International Importance." Amazing wetlands worldwide have been designated as wetlands of international importance; only 30 sites in the United States have earned this prestigious designation. As you know, one of those sites is the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, the 24th Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in the USA and the only one in the state of Ohio. This designation was earned only after an extensive scientific review of the site, and a rigorous application process both within the United States and at the Ramsar

Secretariat in Switzerland. This is one of the first created wetland sites on the globe to receive a Ramsar designation, based on the diverse flora and fauna at the site, the extensive on-site wetland research, and the significant ecotourism at this urban wetland (approximately 150 tours per year are given to thousands of visitors).

The USNRC was notified recently of your University's consideration of a request to permit construction of a high-pressure gas pipeline under the entire length of the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. The OSU Ramsar wetland has internationally important ecology, a global research and teaching reputation, and vibrant outreach to the community. I thus wanted to write to you and clarify obligations pursuant to the Convention.

The Ramsar Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world." The wise use of wetlands is defined as "the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development."

Once a site is designated, under Article 2 of the Convention, Contracting Parties agree that they "shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List," and further direct that "each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference." The full text of the Convention is available at http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-texts-convention-on/main/ramsar/1-31-38%5E20671_4000_0 .

At the most recent international Conference of the Parties in 2008 in Korea, attended by Bill Mitsch of OSU (as an internationally recognized wetland expert), the delegates adopted a Declaration that recognizes "the urgent need for governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to understand more fully the roles they can and should play in securing the future health of wetlands and the maintenance of their ecological character, in relation to the global commitments made under the Ramsar Convention..." A copy of that Declaration is attached.

The USNRC understands the difficult decision that OSU is facing with regards to permitting this underground easement on your campus. This letter is intended to remind you of the recognized ecological treasure on your campus, and suggest you consider the construction of this pipeline in the context of the Ramsar Convention obligations.

From my perspective beyond USNRC, I too work and serve as an administrator within a state university system. I understand the pressures of this current economic time, as well as the realities of the many stakeholders that need to be satisfied within a university system. Yet on behalf of the USNRC I urge you recognize the ramifications of taking an action with possible short-term advantages but almost certain long-term detriment to such an internationally significant treasure.

I would be happy to discuss the Ramsar Convention and its obligations in more detail with you. Feel free to contact me at 716/645-2092 or kimconno@buffalo.edu.

Very truly yours,



Professor Kim Diana Connolly
Chair, USNRC

Attachment: *Changwon Declaration*

cc: Terry Foegler Associate Vice President Physical Planning, The Ohio State University
Mike Mitchell, Assistant Vice President/Associate Gen. Counsel, The Ohio State University
E. Gordon Gee, President, The Ohio State University
William Mitsch, Director, Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, The Ohio State University
Krishna K. Roy, Branch Chief, Global Programs, Division of International Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior
Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Secretariat

Olentangy River Wetland Advisory Committee

Dr. Jerry B. Pausch, Chair
P.O. Box 413
Leesburg, Ohio 45135
Email: jbp3131@yahoo.com

October 6, 2011

Mr. Jay D. Kasey
Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning
The Ohio State University, 101 Bricker Hall
190 N. Oval Mall, Columbus, Ohio 43210

Dear Mr. Kasey,

As long-time donors to The Ohio State University, and especially to The Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park on The Ohio State University campus, we, the signatories to this letter, are very concerned by reports that the University and Ni-Source/Columbia Gas are in the process of permitting a high-pressure gas pipeline to be routed under the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. This wetland research park is the 24th Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in the USA, an ecological and research treasure that is internationally significant and is the first and only Ramsar Site in the State of Ohio. The Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park was designated as an International Ramsar Wetland in 2008 because of its unique ecology, consummate research achievements, teaching reputation, and outreach to the community, the nation, and the international community.

The Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park has been designated by the U.S. Corps of Engineers as jurisdictional protected Waters of the United States under the Federal Clean Water Act, Section 404. We are concerned that the NiSource/Columbia Gas Corporation has chosen this location as their preferred path to install the pipeline, when alternative paths are available. The undersigned oppose the pipeline route in principle, and also because there has not been any guarantee that there will be no impact. The intended plan of action may significantly affect this world-renowned Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, a 50-acre, urban riverine woodland and wetland oasis of natural greenspace habitat in which over 174 bird species have been identified, and a site that serves as a classroom and laboratory for undergraduate and graduate students of The Ohio State University as well as a for a consortium of Ohio institutions of higher learning, and for area grade schools and high schools as well as birders and other nature enthusiasts.

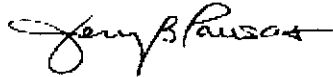
To allow this high-pressure gas pipeline to be routed under the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, which has been in operation for more than twenty years and has attracted donations in excess of 7 million dollars through 5,300 donations in support of innovative research, would be an international public relations nightmare for The Ohio State University. The Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park is the prototype for research parks at other universities, not only in the United States but in many other countries as well. It is, in fact, the gold standard against which other university research parks are measured. The OSU wetland site attracts thousands of visitors, researchers, and students annually and in all seasons.

Ironically, the project is planned to commence in the same time frame as the Eco-Summit 2012, hosted by the MORPC, OSU, INTECOL, and SER, an event held previously in Copenhagen, Denmark; Halifax, Canada; and Beijing, China. A featured destination for Eco-Summit attendees will be The Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. To negatively impact the site of this premier research facility and damage or degrade the integrity of its hydrology and geology would contravene all research methods and results and seriously denigrate the sterling environmental stewardship reputation of The Ohio State University.

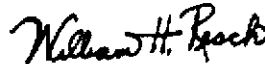
We are aware that the consultants of NiSource/Columbia Gas claim there is low risk from the installation of the high-pressure gas pipeline. There has been no "impact study" carried out by experts; thus, no risk is the only option. Baseline data of long-term research projects are threatened by intrusion of unnatural variables if this planned route proceeds. NiSource/Columbia Gas must pursue alternate routes.

Please respond to our appeal to Dr. Jerry Pausch at the address or email above.

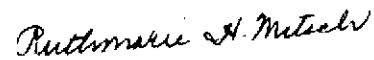
Sincerely,



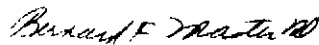
Jerry B. Pausch, Ph.D.
Chair, ORW Advisory Committee
Leesburg, OH
OSU President's Club



William H. Resch
New Albany, OH
OSU-M.A. Class of 1972



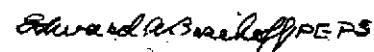
Ruthmarie H. Mitsch, Ph.D.
Editor, *Research in African
Literatures and Spectrum*
The Ohio State University



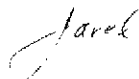
Bernard F. Master, D.O.
Worthington, OH
OSU President's Club



Karen S. Kelly
Upper Arlington, OH
OSU-B.S. Class of 1977



Edward Bischoff, P.E.
President, Bischoff, Miller & Assoc.
Powell, OH



Jared R. Nodelman
New Albany, OH
OSU President's Club



Thomas X. Singer
Wincheser, OR
OSU President's Club



Paul Sipp
Upper Arlington, OH



Walter W. Schiermeier
Cincinnati, OH
OSU-B.S. Class of 1962

cc:

Gordon Gee, President, The Ohio State University
Terry Foegler Associate Vice President Physical Planning, The Ohio State University
Mike Mitchell, Assistant Vice President/Associate Gen. Counsel, The Ohio State University
William Mitsch, Director, Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, The Ohio State University



Saving wetlands for wildlife & people

Mr Gordon Gee
President
The Ohio State University
190 N Oval Mall
Columbus
Ohio 43210
USA

31st October 2011

Dear Vice President Kasey,

Re: Proposed gas pipeline beneath the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park

We are writing to express our concern about the possible decision to allow drilling of a gas pipeline beneath the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORWRP). Our colleagues at the park have been active members of our Wetland Link International project, hosted by WWT, and are a great example of a wetland-based education centre, carrying out long-term research on wetland functions and offering a valuable resource for both students and the local community.

Recognized as a Ramsar site, ORWRP demonstrates international importance despite its small size, due to a biologically diverse range of wetland habitats which are regionally important, the research and education activities carried out, and access to local people and visitors. Ramsar, the international Convention on Wetlands, not only designates sites, but also works to support international sharing of information, and to deliver the concept of 'wise use' of wetlands. ORWRP does much to promote wetland conservation internationally, and is known across the world as a case of best practice. Indeed, the site won a 'Green Globe' award, one of only 6 awards worldwide, under the World Wetland Network's international competition.

The site is clearly very important at local, national and international levels, and the idea that drilling a pipeline beneath it and the river itself will have no significant impact worries us immensely. Without a proper impact assessment, short and longer term effects could be seen that adversely affect the site's hydrology. This has implications for much of the long term monitoring and scientific work that is being carried out, and could jeopardize some of the academic investigations that are being carried out.

We hope that you will reconsider offering an easement to carry out this work, at least until a thorough assessment has been carried to establish the long term effects of the disturbance. An academic institution of your calibre must surely recognize that this could be disastrous for the wetland and those working on it, as well as the local community that calls it their

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BT (Registered office)

T +44 (0)1453 891900 F +44 (0)1453 890827 E enquiries@wwt.org.uk wwt.org.uk



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Registered charity in England & Wales, no. 1030884 and Scotland, no. SC039410 A company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 2882729



Saving wetlands
for wildlife & people

own. Whilst we are not against development per se, we cannot condone this potentially damaging development that could harm this internationally important site.

Best regards,

Mr Chris Rostron
Head of Wetland Link International



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BT (Registered office)
T +44 (0)1453 891900 F +44 (0)1453 890827 E enquiries@wwt.org.uk wwt.org.uk

Patron: HM The Queen President: HRH The Prince of Wales Founder: Sir Peter Scott (Hon. Dir. 1946-1989) Hon. Director: Lady Scott
Registered charity in England & Wales, no. 1030884 and Scotland, no. SC039410 A company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 2882729



Water Resources Center

311 Hitchcock Hall
2070 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210-1275

Phone 614 292-2807
FAX 614 292-3780

October 5, 2011

President E. Gordon Gee
Ohio State University

Re: Columbia Gas construction of a high pressure gas line under the Olentangy River
Wetland Research Park

Dear President Gee,

I serve as the Director of the Ohio Water Resources Center here at Ohio State University. In conversations with Bill Mitsch, I understand that Columbia Gas is requesting to construct a gas line under the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORWLP). I would like to make you aware of the possible implications of this project on water-related research and education in the State of Ohio. As a reminder of who we are, the Water Resources Center (WRC) is the federally-authorized and state-designated Water Resources Research Institute for the state of Ohio, as enacted in the Water Resources Research Act of 1964. The Ohio WRC addresses current and future water-related issues in the state by facilitating innovative, water-related research, technology transfer, and educational outreach activities.

The construction of a gas line directly beneath the ORWRP could affect the integrity of ongoing research projects at the site, and also impact the use of the facility as a "laboratory" to make important future discoveries about water resources and the ecosystem services they provide in Ohio. I am concerned both about possible disruption of research projects during construction, as well as the longer-term disruption to the integrity of the wetland and underlying and connected soil ecosystems. For example, the Ohio WRC is currently funding (through federally-appropriated money) a project examining methane generation at the ORWRP. Understanding methane generation in wetlands is key in predicting the global response to the build-up of climate change gases in the atmosphere. The co-Principle Investigator (Gil Bohrer) has indicated to me that the gas line may significantly impact the integrity of this research project. For example, significant alternation to the wetland during construction may very likely invalidate the data the PI's collected at the site prior to construction. Further, the co-PI is concerned about possible leaks in the gas line impacting methane measurements and ecosystem responses in the future.

The Olentangy River Wetland Research Park serves as an important research and educational resource to train the next generation of water professions for the State of Ohio. Compromising this site by building a gas line may have adverse impacts on this critical mission. We hope you share our concerns and reconsider the location of the high pressure gas line. If I can be of any assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone [292-8263] or e-mail [walker.455@osu.edu].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold W. Walker, Ph.D., P.E.
Professor, *Environmental Engineering*
Director, Ohio Water Resources Center

c.c. William Mitsch



Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering

590 Woody Hayes Drive
Columbus, OH 43210-1057

Phone (614) 292-6131
Fax (614) 292-9448

October 5, 2011

President Gordon Gee
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear President Gee

I am writing to express my concern about the proposal to allow Columbia Gas to construct a natural gas pipeline that would cross the Wilma H. Scheirmeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. Twenty five years ago Bill Mitsch and I joined the faculty of The Ohio State University. Since then Bill and I have worked together on various initiatives including workshops, graduate student research, and assisting each other's graduate students. As a hydrologist and stream geomorphologist I have benefitted from the ORWRP and have been delighted with the national and international recognition the ORWRP has brought to OSU. The ORWRP is very unique and one of OSU's gleaming gems. It is a U.S. based Wetland of International Importance and a Ramsar site. The existence of this wetland on our campus provides us with unparalleled opportunities to conduct research on wetland ecosystems and greatly aids in our ability to win external funding and attract outstanding graduate students.

In the international scientific community interested in wetlands, a human disruption to the ecology of the ORWRP would be viewed very negatively and would adversely impact on numerous faculty, staff, students and scientists not only at OSU but throughout the world. It would also bring into question the credibility of the University. I encourage you to browse the Ramsar website at ramsar.org to learn more about the selection of Ramsar sites and the obligations associated with being selected. The Ramsar Convention's mission is *"the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"*.

I know you have visited the ORWRP and greatly value the fine work that is being done at this location and in CFAES. I trust that you will not allow such a short sighted action to adversely impact on this glowing beacon of excellence that has national and international importance.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Andy Ward", written over the "Regards," text.

Andy Ward
Professor
ward.2@osu.edu

CC: Professor Bill Mitsch

Your reference
JD/SJ

Our reference

Direct line
+31 (0)30 253 6851

Institute of Environmental Biology,
Section Ecology and Biodiversity

Date
22-10-11

Subject
Letter of reference

E-mail
j.t.a.verhoeven@uu.nl

Visiting address
H.R. Kruytgebouw, room N310
Padualaan 8
De Uithof, Utrecht

P.O. Box 80084, 3508 TB Utrecht, The Netherlands

Phone +31 (0)30 253 67 00/01
Fax +31 (0)30 251 83 66

President E. Gordon Gee
Office of the President
Bricker Hall
190 N Oval Mall
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA

Universiteit Utrecht



Faculty of Science

Dear Dr. Gee,

Through my professional contacts, I have learned about plans to construct a high-pressure natural gas pipeline under the entire length (1 km) of the wetland research park and the Olentangy River at the campus of Ohio State University. According to my information, the pipeline will be constructed by horizontal drilling at a depth of approximately 10 m.

I want to express my deep concern about this proposal. The Olentangy Wetland Research Park is a world-class research facility which is famous around the world for its design, example function of wetland creation and excellent record of fine research publications. It is also a RAMSAR site which is a token of this recognition. This pipeline construction comes with the risk of impacting the groundwater and potentially surface water hydrology of the wetlands and the saturated alluvial soils beneath the wetland. This would jeopardize the healthy ecological functioning of the wetland and associated high biodiversity. It would also threaten the site as a research and education facility in Wetland Science.

I am calling on you to help avoiding this disaster by doing all that is in your power to ensure that Ohio State University will not be granting the easement for this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J.T.A. Verhoeven'.

Prof. dr. J.T.A. Verhoeven
Chair, Landscape Ecology
Chairman Centre of Wetland Ecology in the Netherlands and Belgium



INSTITUTE FOR LAND WATER AND SOCIETY

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Albury NSW 2640

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Mr. Jay D. Kasey,
Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning,
The Ohio State University
101 Bricker Hall,
190 N. Oval Mall
Columbus
Ohio 43210, USA

20 October 2011

Re: Future of The Ohio State University Wetlands

Dear Mr Kasey,

I was somewhat alarmed to read that the Olentangy River Wetland Research site at The Ohio State University was under threat from a proposal to insert a high-pressure gas pipeline under the entire length of the wetland and the Olentangy River. My immediate reaction is to question whether this had the potential to *impact on the hydrology of the wetland*, adversely affecting both the ground and surface water hydrology that is so important for maintaining the ecological character of the wetland. As a listed Ramsar site your Government has undertaken to maintain the ecological character of this wetland. *Further, under the text of the Convention is required to report to the Convention if the ecological character has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments etc.* This requirement, which has been accepted by Contracting Parties to the Convention implies a high level of protection and caution is required.

Further, I would be concerned that acceptance of such a proposal could have an incredibly negative impact on the reputation of the research centre. This in itself would be unfortunate given the amount of work that has gone into establishing the centre and hence the OSU as one of the most renowned research and education facilities globally. As I am sure you are aware, it takes a lot of work to establish a reputation at this level, but it can be quickly undone by rash and short-sighted decisions. In our own case we have been developing a proposal to establish a centre that would mimic many of the features that your university has pioneered and with this seek a formal partnership with yourselves, and extend this to others with similar interests. Wetland Link International is

interested in this proposal and would add a strong element of international exposure to our joint endeavours to protect and restore the many degraded wetlands.

My motive in writing also comes from my alarm that wetlands globally are being degraded at rates comparable to those for rainforest degradation. We often point towards loss and degradation in developing countries, but we also need to watch our own patch, and in the process act wisely and set an example that others could follow.

I sincerely hope that your endeavours to maintain the wetland are successful and that the university administration has the foresight to look beyond the proposal for a pipeline through an incredibly valuable resource, namely, the wetland and the wetland centre.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cm29' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Max Finlayson

Professor for Ecology & Biodiversity
Director, Institute for Land, Water & Society, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Member, Ramsar Convention Scientific and Technical Review Panel
Past President, Wetlands International Supervisory Council

DENISON
UNIVERSITY

President Gordon Gee
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

October 13, 2011

Dear President Gee,

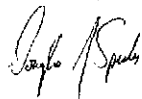
It has recently come to my attention that The Ohio State University is considering allowing Columbia Gas to construct a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that would cross the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. Like hundreds of other OSU alums, I had a first-rate academic experience at the ORWRP during my time at OSU, and I find it difficult to believe that the University would allow such activity.

I'm sure I don't need to remind you, President Gee, that the ORWRP has been designated a Wetland of International Importance according to the criteria of the Ramsar Convention. In fact, it was *only the 24th wetland in the nation to achieve such an honor.*

This honor was bestowed largely because of the voluminous and far-reaching research that the ORWRP has generated and continues to generate. Long-term ecological research is extremely rare and precious in this field, President Gee, and in my opinion this makes ORWRP a gem to be protected and celebrated. The proposed pipeline will surely disrupt this research and alter a research trajectory that is decades in the making.

You are in a position to prevent this disturbance, President Gee. I urge you to do anything in your power to protect this unique ecological laboratory.

Sincerely,



Douglas J. Spieles, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director
Environmental Studies Program
Denison University

Kenyon College

Department of Biology
Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623
Tel 740/427-53

September 27, 2011

President Gordon Gee
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear President Gee

I am writing to express my grave concern about the proposal to allow Columbia Gas to construct a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that would cross the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. I have a long history with, and investment in, the ORW. I was part of the original team that collaborated with Professor Mitsch on the grant proposal to the Board of Regents that secured funding for the research building. Since that time as part of the Ohio consortium on River and Wetland restoration, I have collaborated on projects with students both from OSU and Kenyon College to learn and conduct research on wetlands.

I am also a member of the U.S. National Ramsar Committee, and worked to help the ORW gain approval as a U.S. based Wetland of International Importance. This designation offers a high level of protection and listing a site makes its protection imperative. *The ORW was only the 24th such listed site in the United States* (compared to other countries whose list of sites sometimes numbers in the hundreds), demonstrating its unique characteristics, including a haven of biodiversity and a site of important research on urban wetlands and their conservation. The Ramsar Convention stipulates that designated wetlands be given the highest level of protection, saying that those who enter into Ramsar agreements must work to maintain wetland's "ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development". The proposed pipeline has the potential to cause serious ecological harm, through hydrological changes, alterations to groundwater, and disturbance to the diversity of habitats on site.

The ORW is also a fine research center, and the disruption caused by a pipeline project carries great risk to that research, including by interfering with methane flux and measurements, a key research area championed at the ORW.

In sum, and as a member of the ORW consortium, I strongly advise against this project. International agreements should be honored, and the research going on at the site, carried out by many students, should be protected.

Sincerely,

Siobhan Fennessy
Professor of Biology



Department of English

RECEIVED SEP 27 2011

421 Denney Hall
164 West 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210-1370

Phone (614) 292-6065
Fax (614) 292-7816

President E. Gordon Gee
205 Bricker Hall
190 North Oval Mall
CAMPUS

23 September 2011

Dear President Gee:

I am writing to express my concern about the Columbia Gas survey being conducted at the Olentangy River Wetlands Research Park to investigate the feasibility of routing a gas pipeline through the wetlands. This proposal's indifference to the mission of the Wetlands dismays me! I don't have the expertise to assess in detail the environmental problems posed by such a pipeline, but I can see an alternate route that suggests something about the politics and values at play. Why go through a painstakingly created wetland central to the research and teaching of many faculty members when Columbia Gas could get from Chemical Abstracts to Olentangy Village by laying a nearly straight pipeline under one of the roads in Union Cemetery? I can imagine all of the cultural/political complications involved in routing the pipeline through a cemetery, but why aren't the complications of drilling through an environmentally delicate research wetland equally problematic?

Sincerely,

H. Lewis Ulman
Associate Professor of English
(614) 292-2275
ulman.1@osu.edu



Department of Environmental Science & Policy
George Mason University
4400 University Dr. MSN 5F2
Fairfax, VA 22030
October 7, 2011

President Gordon Gee
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear President Gee

I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposal to allow Columbia Gas to construct a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that would cross the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. I am currently an associate professor at George Mason University in Virginia. I was a Ph.D student at the Ohio State, working with Professor Mitsch during 1996 through 2001. I spent extensive amount of time doing my research and participating in regular monitoring programs at the Park back then. I have such a fond memory of all my experience at the Park, which made me what I am today. The ORW is a world-class level outdoor classroom for so many disciplines that has nurtured so many young minds of current and future scientists and conservationists. I even took my entire class in Spring 2009 to the ORW to provide students with the opportunity to experience the created wetland complex. Moreover, I was the advisor for the documentary produced by Korean Broadcasting Company (KBS), filming the ORW with the crew in Summer 2008. I remember meeting you in your office during the filming.

The ORW is the 24th Ramsar wetland of international importance in the United States. This means the site should be given the highest level of protection. The proposed pipeline has the potential to cause serious ecological damage to the site, not to mention disrupting all the research and teaching activities at the ORW.

International agreements should be honored, and the research going on at the site, carried out by many students, should be protected. I hope you will reconsider the location of the gas line.

Sincerely,

Changwoo Ahn
Associate Professor

2710 NW Garryanna Drive
Corvallis, OR 97330
October 12, 2011

The Ohio State University Foundation Board of Directors
1480 West Lane Avenue
Columbus, OH 43221

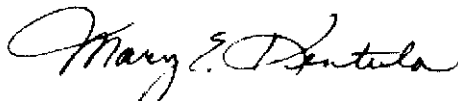
Dear Foundation Board of Directors:

I am writing to express my concern about and opposition to the proposal to allow Columbia Gas to drill a horizontal, 20-inch, natural gas pipeline that would cross the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORWRP) north to south under the entire wetland. This proposal has the potential to cause serious ecological harm to the site both now with the drilling and in the future if a failure of the pipeline were to occur. It will also likely affect the results of the ongoing research at the ORWRP because of the alteration of the soil, geology, and movement of ground water beneath the wetland.

Besides being a world-class research center and amenity to the citizens of Columbus and those who visit, the ORWRP is a Wetland of International Importance recognized under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty of which the United States is a signatory. In my opinion, consideration of the proposal is an affront to the terms of the treaty and to the designation of international importance, which requires the highest level of protection and the maintenance of the wetland's ecological character.

I decided to contact you because last year I became a donor to The Ohio State University (OSU) Foundation and earmarked the funds for the support of the ORWRP. I am not an Ohio State Alumnus nor am I associated with OSU in any way. I am a wetland professional, who feels a personal responsibility to support the vision and the outstanding work and accomplishments of Professor William Mitsch and his team of scientists, students, and citizens. I hope that the University also feels a strong responsibility to support the accomplishments that exemplify the ORWRP and will reject the proposal to drill the pipeline under the wetland.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Kentula, Ph.D.
Wetland Ecologist

cc: E. Gordon Gee, President, Ohio State University
William J. Mitsch, Director, Olentangy River Wetland Research Park



SCHOOL OF FORESTRY
AND WILDLIFE SCIENCES

13 October 2011

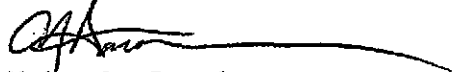
President Gordon Gee
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Dear President Gee,

I am writing to express my concern about a current proposal to construct a pipeline across the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park (ORW). The ORW was recently listed as a Wetland of International Importance by the U.S. Ramsar Committee. This important distinction makes the ORW one of only 26 such wetlands in the United States and puts in the same category as national icons like the Everglades and the Okefenokee Swamp. The ORW was recognized because of the ground breaking discoveries made in wetland science there. A Ramsar designation is intended to identify wetlands that merit the highest levels of protection. Installing a pipeline across the ORW would break our commitment to protect this wetland while also disrupting long-term, ongoing research. As an Ohio State alum and wetland scientist, it would be very disappointing to hear that the university authorized such activity.

The ORW has been a source of pride for Ohio State and the surrounding community. I strongly advise that the university recognize its agreement with the Ramsar committee, protect current and future research endeavors at the ORW, and not allow pipeline construction through the property.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Anderson
Assistant Professor

3301 FORESTRY AND
WILDLIFE SCIENCES BUILDING
AUBURN, AL 36849-5418

www.auburn.edu



E. Gordon Gee
President
Office of the President
190 N. Oval Mall
The Ohio State University
Columbus OH 43210

October 6, 2011

Dear President Gee,

As a proud alumna of The Ohio State University's Wetland Research Center, I feel strongly that the proposed Columbia pipeline under the Olentangy River Wetlands Research Center has the potential to do great harm to the site in a number of ways:

- The pipeline threatens the **stability of the** site, which is **currently in use** as a research center by **graduate students, professors and scientists from across the state, nation and world**. A change in the hydrology of the wetlands and their surroundings **places the work of many at risk**. Much of this research is long-term and depends on the wetlands' stability.
- The site is a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. This impressive distinction marks this unique Ohio State property as a wetland that is to be given the highest level of protection.
- The site is **an** educational tool, not just for Ohio State students, but also for those from **other nearby colleges**. I bring several groups of students to the wetlands from Columbus State Community College each year. A disturbance of the magnitude proposed would mean closing the door on an invaluable educational experience for many.
- The site is a community jewel that brings all of the wonderful inhabitants of wetlands to the people of this city. The site provides a recreational area for the city and a bird watching haven for many of us. To threaten that diversity seems shortsighted.

I strongly oppose granting an easement to Columbia Gas and I find it surprising that the university is even taking it into consideration given the value of the Olentangy River Wetlands Research site to education, research and our community.

Sincerely,

Julie Cronk, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Biological Sciences Department
cc William J. Mitsch

Southwestern University

October 11, 2011

E. Gordon Gee
President
Office of the President
190 N. Oval Mall
The Ohio State University
Columbus OH 43210

Dear President Gee,

I am writing to call your attention to a critical issue. One of the most unique and valuable research and education assets that The Ohio State University offers, the Olentangy Wetland Research Park, appears threatened. As a trained ecologist and wetland scientist, I adamantly oppose any proposal that would allow Columbia Gas to construct a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that would cross the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park.

Based on my experience and time at the ORP as an fellowship-funded Ohio State Postdoctoral Fellow, I learned more about wetland processes, ecology, economics and politics than I ever thought possible. I use this knowledge and experience daily in my role as an Associate Professor of Ecology at Southwestern University, a small liberal arts college similar to Denison. I developed a course called Wetland Ecology and Policy directed based on my experience. Dr. Bill Mitsch did an outstanding job of showing me the interdisciplinary nature and challenges of wetland science. Now, it seems that politics and economics want to displace the foundation of science and education. Whatever the economic gain, it cannot be worth the price of losing such a unique system.

I have followed the success and expansion of the ORP with great curiosity since my stay as a postdoctoral researcher. I remember going out to the ORP to take measurements myself. Now with the automated system, this data serves as an important international resource. As mentioned, I often teach about the importance of wetlands in urban watersheds and the need for science in general to reach out to the public sector. The Ohio State University's past dedication to the ORP and its recent growth serve as an excellent case study used by professionals around the world. I have been amazed each time I look at the website at the progress being made. Putting a natural gas pipeline through 25+ years of work seems more than ludicrous.

The site recently earned status as a RAMSAR wetland of international importance for several reasons. That means it deserves extra protection. Data collection from the long-term monitoring of two basins and the bottomland forest has been extrapolated to

P.O. Box 770 Georgetown, Texas 78627-0770
512.863.6511 www.southwestern.edu

Southwestern University

gauge substantial potential impacts of nutrient loading to the restoration, management and success of riverine and forested wetlands worldwide. Awarding of the Stockholm Prize to Bill speaks to his success and that of The Ohio State University.

The ORP does contain a representative flora and fauna (with the occasional special visitor), indicate of the historical state of Ohio as part of a larger wetland complex. This biodiversity is simply irreplaceable and priceless. Situated in the middle of urban Columbus, I also believe that the ORP does serve as a refuge for many organisms. The unique hydrological design of the ORP allows substantial interchange of water between the Olentangy River and the ORP. The ORP deserved a RAMSAR designation as a signal to wetland restoration projects in the United States that we should value these habitats.

The proposed pipeline will undoubtedly result in serious ecological harm, through hydrological changes, groundwater alterations and disturbance to the biodiversity and habitats on site. I hope that the leadership initiatives to support the ORP continue in your administration and that you set priorities to further conserve this valuable scientific and educational resource.

Sincerely,



Romi L. Burks, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology
Southwestern University
1001 East University Avenue
Georgetown, TX 78626
Office Phone: 512-863-1280
Lab Phone: 512-863-1640
FAX: 512-863-1696
email: burksr@southwestern.edu
Website: <http://people.southwestern.edu/~burksr/>

MICHAEL G. PEPPE

2845 Margate Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221
614-457-6650, Office
614-314-1474, Cell

October 22, 2011

Professor William Mitsch, Director
OSU Wilma H. Schiermeier Research Park
Heffner Wetland Research Bldg.
352 W. Dodridge Street
Columbus, OH 43202

Re: *The Columbus Dispatch* article, "Pipeline Could Pass Under OSU Wetlands"

Dear Professor Mitsch:

I am frankly exasperated by the recently reported proposed alignment of a Columbia Gas high pressure gas line under The Ohio State University Wetland Research Park. I have been around The Ohio State University for a very long time and cannot think of one other internationally acclaimed university facility. This is the type of positive recognition that officials say they want for OSU especially when there is so much negative publicity nationally concerning the football program.

Public utilities share a community responsibility to make decisions based on fact finding. If such due diligence had been done during the evaluation portion of the planning process, this letter would not have been required.

The facts are glaringly apparent that The Ohio State University Wetlands Research Park has earned numerous national and international awards, culminating in the most prestigious international award that is an honor to OSU, Columbus and Ohio. And now there is a proposal to jeopardize this treasure by running a high pressure gas line under it? What are university and utility officials thinking?

This facility is one of a kind for an academic campus and brings Ohio State positive international recognition. It should be a point of pride, not some cheap commodity that can be so easily endangered by such a poorly conceived plan.

The Columbia Gas system needs to be commended for its overall safety record and vilified when decisions such as this pipe line alignment endanger an outstanding academic achievement within the national and international scientific community.

Columbia Gas and OSU should be embarrassed and ashamed to even release their spin doctors' comments that, "We want to do this right and make sure there is no meaningful risk to the wetlands." Oh, really!

Do the right thing and remove from consideration a Columbia Gas high pressure gas line underneath OSU's research wetlands of international significance.

Sincerely,


Michael G. Peppe

Cc: OSU Board of Trustees
G. Gordon Gee, OSU President

Archie Griffin, OSU Alumni Assn.
Ohio Governor John Kasich

Ohio Power Siting Commission
Jack Partridge, Columbia Gas



Office of the President,
The Ohio State University
Dr. Gordon Gee
190 N. Oval Mall,
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Dr. Gee:

For eight years, 1994 -2001, I, along with undergraduate students of Shawnee State University, was involved with the research at the Olentangy River Wetland Research facility. This involvement was quite beneficial to all of us, especially so for our undergrads. Shawnee State's participation in the research program was terminated largely because of increasing on-campus workload for me and because of travel distance and expenses for our students.

Because of my experience at the OSU wetlands facility and my knowledge of its value as both research and educational facility I am appalled that installation of a gas pipeline beneath it is even considered, let alone that it may be permitted and built. Along with other biologists at Shawnee State I urge you to do everything in your power to prevent such a devastating impact on this world-class research facility.

In my opinion it would make far more sense to run the pipeline under one of the crossroads that pass through the cemetery just to the west of the Wetlands.

Sincerely,

D. Robert Deal, Ph.D.
Prof. of Biology

www.shawnee.edu

740.354.3205

940 Second Street ■ Portsmouth, Ohio 45662-4344

31 October 2011

President Gordon Gee
205 Bricker Hall
190 North Oval Mall

Dear President Gee:

I write out of great concern about a proposal to allow Columbia Gas to install a high-pressure gas line beneath the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park. Such a pipeline would put at risk the ecological integrity of the site, carefully nurtured over the past 15 years by Dr. William Mitsch and his associates, potentially compromising a number of long-term research projects associated with wetland restoration. I urge you to reject the Columbia Gas proposal.

Having been present at the creation of the Wilma Schiermeier Research Park, you are undoubtedly aware of the dedication and hard work that have gone into creating this unique site. The value of that work has earned the OSU Wetlands designation as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, one of only 24 such sites in the United States. The University should be doing its utmost to protect one of its best-known and scientifically significant facilities.

In addition to the research projects it houses, the Schiermeier Research Park provides a vital amenity to the OSU campus community--students, staff and faculty alike--by providing a model of wetland restoration and wildlife protection in an urban environment. I have personally accompanied a number of student groups on visits to the Research Park, and watched as their eyes have been opened both to the complexity of wetland ecology and the beauty of the natural site. Just this past September, the new "Green Buckeye" first-year pre-orientation program found their understanding of campus sustainability deepened by their experience at the site.

A decision to allow Columbia Gas to proceed would be extremely short-sighted and do significant damage to Ohio State University's reputation internationally, especially as OSU and the city of Columbus prepare to host the international Eco-summit in 2012. Please encourage Columbia Gas and the Power Siting Board to find an alternate route for their pipeline.

Respectfully,

Rick Livingston
Interim Director
OSU Humanities Institute
104 East 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201



Ohio Environmental Council

1207 Grandview Avenue, Suite 201
Columbus, Ohio 43212

(614) 487-7506
www.ohioec.org

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GREEN

November 4, 2011

Gordon Gee, President
The Ohio State University
190 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Dear President Gee:

We understand that The Ohio State University is considering whether or not to allow Columbia Gas to drill under the OSU Wetlands Research center.

The Ohio Environmental Council's (OEC) mission is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. On behalf of our over 100 environmental and conservation member organizations and thousands of members throughout the state of Ohio, the OEC urges OSU to do everything in its power to prevent impacts to the urban emerald that is the research center.

We understand that there are at least two proposals Columbia Gas is exploring. The one proposal would place a high pressure natural gas pipeline beneath the 52 acre research site. This is concerning as any negative impact to the wetlands will hurt the ecosystem, community and the university's reputation.

As you may know healthy wetlands are essential, dynamic ecosystems that serve several important functions. Today, we know how vital wetlands are to our community's well being. They minimize stream down cutting and bank erosion as well as act as natural flood controls. The excess flood water is contained and released slowly by the wetland, whereas without a wetland, detrimental flooding would be a more common event. Citizens' basements, yards and streets may be flooded which in turn impacts the economy through loss of work days and property damage. Wetlands also filter pollutants, leaving water cleaner for use downstream as drinking water. Furthermore, wetlands provide habitat for thousands of plants, animals, and insects, some of which are threatened and endangered. If the wetland goes away, these flora and fauna will leave with it, lowering the quality of life in that area. The OSU wetlands site is internationally recognized as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. It is the only wetland in Ohio with such designation.

We understand that OSU is seeking a third party study to look at the potential impacts to the wetlands. We commend the University for taking this step. We look forward to seeing the results of the study and how it may potentially shine a new light on this controversial issue.

OSU has built a reputation as a world-class education system and their natural resources/environment areas of OSU have made great strides in educating students on the restoration, creation, and conservation of wetlands and streams.

Sincerely,

David R. Celebrezze

David R. Celebrezze
Dir. of Air & Water
Special Projects

Cc: Mike Mitchell, Assistant Vice President/Associate General Counsel,
Terry Foegler Associate Vice President Physical Planning
Jay D. Kasey, Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning
Joseph Alutto The Ohio State University Executive Vice President



Paul Weihe, Biology
Box 015
E-mail: weihep@central.edu

Dr. E. Gordon Gee, President
The Ohio State University
205 Bricker Hall
190 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210-1357

11月 1, 2011

Dear President Gee,

I write to ask you to oppose the proposed natural gas pipeline at the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park.

I was a Doctoral student working under Dr. William J. Mitsch when the wetland was constructed, and I completed my dissertation work on the plant community development in these wetlands. I know from many hours of mud and swimmer's itch and sunburn, what it takes to make a great research site. This facility is all that and more: it is unique in the world, and recognized internationally as such. Over these succeeding decades, thousands have studied this site as undergraduates, graduate students, workshop participants, postdoctoral associates, nature enthusiasts and so many who simply care about Earth's life-sustaining systems. These wetlands have taught us a great deal indeed.

It would be a terrible mistake to allow a utility company to place a pipeline through the site. Even if this pipeline worked perfectly, it would require routine access for inspection and maintenance, loss of full future use of the property, and most likely a removal or replacement in the future. If the pipeline doesn't work properly, but instead needs to be dug for repair--- or worse ,develops leaks--the effects on the site would be incredibly harmful. This proposed pipeline could in no way advance the work of the University community, and should be opposed.

Dr. Gee, I recall the glorious day two decades ago when we dedicated the wetlands. As I tended a Barbeque grill to feed the celebrants, you wore a big grin as you donned waders and planted the Buckeye Block "O" flag in the new swamp. Everyone present that day sensed how proud you were of our efforts, and excited to give the project your enthusiastic support. Please recall that amazing day in our lives, and do whatever you can to stop this ill-advised impact on our wonderful Buckeye Swamp.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Paul E. Weihe'.

Paul Weihe
Associate Professor



& Tributaries 4991 E. Johnstown Rd., New Albany, OH 43054

November 12, 2011

E. Gordon Gee
President
The Ohio State University
205 Bricker Hall
90 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Dear President Gee,

The Friends of the Big Walnut & Tributaries feel the Wilma H. Schiermeier River Wetland Research Park is worth protecting. As an international Ramsar Convention site it fits integrally into the many internationally recognized activities and programs of The Ohio State University. I am sure you are aware of the proposed Columbia Gas high pressure underground gas line which would be drilled below the Research Park. Recent reports by the Excell Group Environmental Services, Inc. and InterCom Construction, Inc. show varying degrees of risk for this adventure. While InterCom feels that the crossing is at the "higher end" of ground conditions Excell notes that the underlying rock is "fractured and non-supporting". They also note the risks of "drilling fluid loss and connectivity to the surface or watercourse". These conflicting reports when underground drilling is involved are not uncommon. Drilling in remote locations where critical water resources are not present can reduce these concerns. However, the Wilma H. Schiermeier River Wetland Research Park is well, "wet" and not "remote".

Our understanding is that The Ohio State University would need to grant an easement to Columbia Gas for this project to proceed in its proposed configuration under the Wetland Research Park. We would suggest that an alternate route would be the proper solution in this case.

Thank you for your continued high standard of leadership and vision at The Ohio State University. Please contact us if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Robert Kyle, President
Friends of Big Walnut Creek & Tributaries

ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMENTS: The proposed project lies within the range of the **Indiana bat** (*Myotis grisescens*), a federally-listed endangered species. Since first listed as endangered in 1967, their population has declined by nearly 60%. Several factors have contributed to the decline of the Indiana bat, including *habitat loss and degradation of suitable hibernacula, human disturbance during hibernation periods, and the loss and degradation of forested habitat, particularly stands of large, mature trees.* Fragmentation of forest habitat may also contribute to declines. Summer habitat requirements for the species are not well defined but the following are considered important:

- (1) dead or live trees and snags with peeling or exfoliating bark, split tree trunk and/or branches, or cavities, which may be used as maternity roost areas;
- (2) live trees (such as shagbark hickory and oaks) which have exfoliating bark;
- (3) stream corridors, riparian areas, and upland woodlots which provide forage sites.

Because both the preferred and alternate routes cross a forested riparian area, it appears that suitable habitat for the Indiana bat may be present in portions of the proposed pipeline. Should the proposed site contain trees or associated habitats exhibiting any of the characteristics listed above, we recommend that *the habitat and surrounding trees be saved wherever possible. If trees must be cut, suitable bat roost trees should not be cut between April 1 and September 30.* Due to the small area of impact, the linear nature of the project, and the limited amount of potential roosting habitat, we believe that implementation of the seasonal tree clearing guidelines is sufficient to avoid and minimize any potential effects to the Indiana bat. If the seasonal tree clearing guidelines cannot be implemented, mist net or other surveys may be warranted to determine if bats are present. Any survey should be designed and conducted in coordination with the Endangered Species Coordinator for this office.

The proposed project lies within the range of the several mussel species including the **clubshell mussel** (*Pleurobema clava*), a federally-listed endangered species, the **snuffbox mussel** (*Epioblasma triquetra*), a Federal species of concern and an Ohio endangered species and the **rayed bean** (*Villosa fabalis*), a Federal candidate species. The clubshell inhabits stream areas with sand or gravel substrate and prefers areas with riffles and runs. Potential habitat for the clubshell exists in the Olentangy River. A proposed rule to list the snuffbox under the Endangered Species Act is currently being developed and may be completed in 2008. The snuffbox is known to occur in the Olentangy River in swift currents of riffles and shoals over gravel and sand with occasional cobble and boulders. The rayed bean is generally known from smaller, headwater creeks, but records exist in larger rivers and potential habitat exists in the Olentangy River. They are usually found in or near shoal or riffle areas, and in the shallow, wave-washed areas of lakes. Substrates typically include gravel and sand, and they are often associated with, and buried under the roots of, vegetation, including water willow (*Fusticia americana*) and water milfoil (*Myriophyllum* sp.).

Because potential habitat for the clubshell and rayed bean does exist in the project area and the snuffbox is known to occur in the area, we recommend that a survey be conducted in the vicinity of the proposed site as well as for 500 feet downstream of the site to determine if any of these three species are present. If mussels are found within the project area, we recommend that construction occur 500 to 1000 feet upstream of the mussels, or 50 feet downstream of them. In addition, while the project is being constructed, silt screens should be utilized to minimize disturbance to the mussels. In addition, we recommend that the project utilize directional drilling under the Olentangy River at the crossing point instead of traditional construction trenching techniques to avoid potential impacts to these mussel species.

The proposed project also lies within the range of the **northern riffleshell** (*Epioblasma torulosa angustata*), a Federally-listed endangered mussel species. Potential habitat for the northern riffleshell has been identified in the Seneca River approximately 6.5 miles downstream from the project site. However,

no potential habitat for the northern riffleshell has been identified in the Olentangy River. Therefore, due to the project type, location, and onsite habitat, no impacts to this species would be expected.

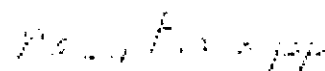
Although the Scioto madtom (*Noturus truttmani*) is listed in Franklin County, the Scioto madtom is known only from Big Darby Creek. It has not been seen since 1957. The known habitat includes riffles where the water velocity was decreasing and the substrate was composed of sandy gravel with some small stones no larger than 4 inches in diameter. This species is thought to be extinct. Thus, we do not anticipate that any impacts on the Scioto madtom will occur as a result of the proposed project.

MIGRATORY BIRD COMMENTS: The project lies within the range of the **bald eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a species protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No known nests are within the project area, and no impact to this species is expected. Relative to this species, this precludes the need for further action on this project as required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Should additional information on listed or proposed species or their critical habitat become available or if new information reveals effects of the action that were not previously considered, our comments and recommendations may be reconsidered. This technical assistance letter is submitted in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and is consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

Please note that consultation under section 7 of the ESA may be warranted for this project since suitable habitat for the Indiana bat and listed mussel species may be impacted by this project. This letter provides technical assistance only and does not serve as a completed section 7 consultation document. If you have questions, or if we may be of further assistance in this matter, please contact Jennifer Smith-Castro at extension 14 in this office.

Sincerely,



Mary Knaap, Ph.D.
Field Supervisor

cc: Dr. Bill Moss, Director, Wilma E. Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park
ODNR, DOW, SCEA Unit, Columbus, OH
ODNR, Division of Real Estate & Land Management, Columbus, OH