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Natalie L. Smith
9456 Reading Rd.
Cincinnati, OH
45215 natalieLsmith1@gmail.com

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Ohio Public Siting Board
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio
43215

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing this letter to express my shock and extreme concern that Duke Energy is considering a plan to place a 30-inch pipeline through the heart of a densely populated area in northern Hamilton County. Let me be clear: this is not a typical gas distribution pipeline. This is a comparatively enormous line, rarely used near urban areas for reasons that will likely become obvious below. Duke claims that such line is necessary to meet future demand. Despite Duke's assertions, 30-inch pipe is intended for long-distance transmission. For an intra-urban supply line, a safer, smaller diameter pipe could and absolutely should be considered for use. It is clear that this proposed line is intended only to help Duke's bottom line by transporting large amounts of gas for sale elsewhere, not within Hamilton County. I am concerned by a) Duke's lack of a good-faith effort to inform the public (particularly those who would be located in a danger zone) about this plan, b) Duke's failure to consider potential dangers when planning the route of this huge new gas line, and c) Duke simultaneously dismisses the dangers inherent in the project but also their own liability should something go wrong.

A. Duke's lack of a good-faith effort to inform the public: When I go to discuss the issue with my neighbors, I have found that many of them are not even aware of the pipeline or of the fact that they live so close to one of the proposed routes as to be within the distance of "blast radii" or thermal radiation hazard zones as reported in tables found online and as observed from accidents that have happened already.

Although Duke dismisses concerns of an accident occurring, the severity of the potential consequences is huge, and Duke should have the decency to proactively inform those who may be put into danger, and respond to safety concerns in an honest manner. Duke has made little effort to inform those who may be affected. Newspaper readership has been in a decline for some time nationwide and the placement of a notice in the newspaper no longer constitutes a good faith effort to inform the public.

B. Duke's failure to consider potential dangers when planning the route: Choosing to run such a large gas line through an urban area already creates significant risk. However, Duke is choosing to build this pipeline in some areas that create an even greater risk of explosion or fire. The proposed route runs along a railroad right-of-way—this is a place where derailments are very possible. A derailed train might well be carrying highly flammable materials and derailments can frequently cause very hot fires that are difficult to control. How safe is it for a pipeline to be located nearby? Would a pipeline be deep enough to be safe from damage under those circumstances? Duke, in making a decision to locate

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a pipeline in such a location, must assume the responsibility to ensuring that it is a safe choice to make. Would Duke try to shift the financial responsibility for covering the ensuing disaster onto others?

One of the selected routes runs within a few hundred feet of an oil supply company, with a tank farm in close proximity to the route, and two gas stations. Again, in making a choice to run this pipeline through such an area, Duke is choosing to subject their pipeline to increased hazard of exposure to fires. I had noticed that the Pipeline Safety statistics on accidents in tables available online exclude those pipeline accidents that began due to another unrelated fire. That worries me that it shows a thought process that does not take any responsibility for increased exposure to such hazards in the first place and skews the pertinent hazard data.

Derailments can also produce spills of other materials from ruptured tanker cars. Highly corrosive chemicals, such as concentrated sulfuric acid, are very commonly transported by railroad tanker car. If a tanker car full of such a corrosive material were to spill, the corrosive chemical would immediately begin to sink into the soil. Sulfuric acid does not evaporate, so over the ensuing months and years, the corrosive chemical only sinks deeper and deeper into the soil. Are the coatings on pipelines designed for such a high level, prolonged exposure to such a corrosive chemical? My understanding is that the minimum depth for a pipeline in proximity to a railroad is 36". I find it very difficult to believe that this is a safe buffer from the hazards I have just described. A derailed locomotive can gouge several feet into the earth. Corrosive chemicals could sink that deep into the soil in a matter of hours. How is that adequate?

C. Duke simultaneously dismisses the dangers inherent in the project but also their own liability should something go wrong: It concerns me greatly that Duke has repeatedly underacknowledged the risks that it would be creating, and yet has emphasized its lack of responsibility should something unthinkable happen. Duke has studiously avoided discussion of the actual hazards associated with living or working within known hazard radii of a pipeline of this size and pressure. Studies have estimated that the blast radius for a pipeline of the size and pressure proposed is about 500 feet. However, this is misleading, because the actual area of danger is much bigger. What the stated blast radius does not include is another larger radius (extending hundreds of feet beyond the blast radius) of extreme thermal radiation danger. What this means is that for quite a distance beyond the blast radius, the heat caused by the explosion would be so intense that a person could not be outside without suffering burns like those from a broiler. So, in the event of an accident, the citizens in that zone would essentially be trapped in their homes, unable to be evacuated, as the fire spreads out of control. My own home lies within this un-evacuatable area. What other homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses are located within this area? Duke does not seem to have even acknowledged these dangers, much less to have addressed the concerns of the residents they would be putting at risk.

Fires caused by these gas lines are notoriously difficult to control. One such fire in San Bruno, California killed eight people. It would have caused much greater death and destruction were it not for the fact that a nearby airport had three water-bomber airplanes filled and ready. The fire was only able to be stopped by the use of those water-bomber airplanes and the local emergency departments credit their use with saving many lives. Are there any water-bomber airplanes in Hamilton County to call on for help? Are our emergency departments equipped to deal with such an enormous disaster? What financial responsibility would Duke have assist with the extra emergency responder costs that Hamilton County must incur in order to be prepared for a potential disaster—even if such a disaster never occurs?

Duke Energy has tried to imply that the risk of an accident is comparable to that of having a "jet airplane drop on your home". That is entirely wrong. In the United States, between 1994 and 2013, there were 745 serious incidents with gas distribution lines, causing 278 fatalities and 1059 injuries. There were an additional 110 serious incidents with gas transmission lines, causing 41 fatalities and 195 injuries. There were five major explosions in 2014 alone. The fatality rate for those transmission pipeline accidents would be significantly higher were it not for one thing - - most of these large transmission pipelines are routed through areas with few people living nearby for reasons that are likely now obvious. Duke should be doing the same. This pipeline should be outside of densely populated areas or reduced to a safer size.

Despite not acknowledging these potential dangers, Duke has made of point of stating that they cannot promise that the pipe might not be damaged in ways beyond their control. I would like to point out that the risk to life and property in this situation IS in their control. This process of selecting a route and choosing to install such a large pipe sets the stage for any and all potential disasters that might arise. Duke is exercising that responsibility now, in choosing to place profit motive above the safety of the community.

Sincerely,
Natalie L. Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie L. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'N' and 'S'.