

GEORGE VOINOVICH
OHIO

06-1142-GA-BIN
(Ohio)



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Joseph T. Kelliher
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

Dear Commissioner Kelliher:

I write to you concerning the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for Rockies Express (REX) East project proposed by Rockies Express Pipeline LLC, and concerns that have been raised with me regarding the pipeline's proposed route through Ohio.

It is my understanding that the proposed route in eastern Ohio would unnecessarily traverse a major operating underground coal mine, the Century Mine, which currently produces nearly one-third of Ohio's coal and employs several hundred people. My constituent suggests that the proposed gas pipeline route, if approved, could have a devastating effect on the production of coal in Ohio. In addition, the coal from the mine is the primary feedstock for electric generation in Ohio and several surrounding states.

Despite comments raising this issue, both the draft and final EIS prepared for your consideration state that "no active coal mines . . . were identified in the locations crossed by the REX East project facilities." While the EIS documents assume that a "mitigation plan" can accommodate land subsidence caused by coal mining on the pipeline route, I have been told that the technical reports in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission record indicate that such mitigation is infeasible in the steep slope terrain found in eastern Ohio where the Century Mine is located.

EIS documents considered pipeline route alternatives for other identified land use conflicts such as the City of Indianapolis, Deer Creek Lake State Park in Ohio, and Big Darby Creek (a designated wild and scenic river) in Ohio. In each of these cases and others, route adjustments were considered to minimize environmental and land use conflicts in the proposed pipeline route. In the case of Century Mine, however, no route alternatives appear to have been considered.

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The REX East project represents a significant investment in our nation's energy infrastructure, and I have no objection to your agency taking action to approve the vast majority of the pipeline route. I simply ask that you fully and accurately evaluate the impact this section of the pipeline could potentially have in terms of lost jobs and energy costs in the State of Ohio. Please give all due consideration to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



George V. Voinovich
United States Senator

cc: Marc Spitzer, Commissioner
Jon Wellinghoff, Commissioner
Philip D. Moeller, Commissioner
Suede G. Kelly, Commissioner