

FILE

16-253-GA-BTX

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September 12, 2016

Ohio Power Siting Board

180 East Broad Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Duke Energy Natural Gas Transmission Line through Blue Ash, OHIO and Surrounding Communities

Case No. 16-253-GA-BT

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2016 SEP 15 PM 12:47

TO Ohio Power Board Siting Members,

Asim Z. Haque, David Daniels, David Goodman, Craig Butler, Richard Hodges, James Zehringer, Jeffrey J. Lechak, and,

TO Ohio Senate Members,

Bill Seitz and Michael Skindell, Sandra Williams and,

TO Ohio House of Representative Member

Christina Hagan

Dear Ohio Power Siting Board Members,

My husband and I were absolutely shocked to hear about the Natural Gas Transmission Pipeline scheduled to be installed through residential neighborhoods in Cincinnati. We live in the affected community.

My husband and I are both Environmental Geologists, and actually understand the dynamics of this proposed pipeline.

I worked at Fernald Environmental Management Project 12 years and when that project ended, I began working under contract for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Environmental Response Team Program (ERTP) as a Training Instructor. I trained EPA employees, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm (ATF) teams, U.S. Military Personnel, U.S. Coast Guard Strike Teams, private environmental response companies and local public emergency and hazmat responders throughout the nation in environmental response to environmental disasters utilizing the Incident Command System (ICS). My husband is involved at a project management level with risk assessment evaluation for the disposal and management of hazardous radioactive waste. So, in short, neither one of us are strangers to human and environmental risks involving situations that pose any possible hazard to safety and health.

Personally, our best guess regarding this endeavor undertaken by Duke Energy is this: it's a "hand-shake deal" sealed on a very high political level in consideration of the speed with which this "deal" is going down. There is no other reasonable conclusion for the exclusion of public interest and safety!

It is unbelievable that local county and township officials were *not formally* notified of this upcoming event prior to the "mailing notice" to private citizens living along potential pipeline routes, and would not be aware of it now, excepting for a citizen in our neighborhood that took up the torch, Elizabeth Rueve-Miller. This situation is

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remindful of Lisa Crawford, a homeowner living near the Fernald Site, who blew the whistle on uranium contamination of groundwater and brought the EPA into the realization that the site needed to be shut down and cleaned up. God bless our neighbor for shining the light on Duke's proposed plans and her networking to bring the affected townships together to stand up for the "railroading" of this commercial gas line coming through **heavily populated areas**.

If there were ANY Environmental Impact Assessments, where are they? And if there was one, when was the whole community involved with that? To the best of my knowledge and information, our community found out about it through a "mailing" that was received from Duke Energy, distributed ONLY to those properties that were adjacent to the proposed pipeline route. Quite a shifty and deceitful strategy. Unfortunately, this is not an unusual way to do business in the corporate realm, especially, when the corporation knows they are not doing the right thing in the first place. It's an opportunist way to save millions of dollars in the construction of an industrial pipeline that is probably eventually routed all the way to the southern states. Hmmm. Consider the profits to be made by Duke Energy over time with such an endeavor! And the good people of this District giving up THEIR safety for that!

And speaking of "railroading", as you should be aware, the management of these pipelines is administrated through the Department of Transportation (DOT). And major highway or railway arteries are where the lines should travel. In my review of the Federal Code, pipelines that run those routes receive the most regulated and regular inspections and pose the least threat. And, I must add, "regulation and monitoring" of these pipelines is vague at best. There are no "clear cut rules" or guidelines, with the citizens being completely at the mercy of the DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Administrator's discretion. In my review of Pipeline Law through websites of legal firms that work in this field (pipelinelaw.com), the DOT has not cleaned up their act regarding violations and recommendations of the last bill through sent the U.S. Congress in 2011 (Pipeline Safety Update, Issue 107, March 26, 2016). So, how in the world are they going to be able to meet the new updated guidelines presented in the bill that is before Congress now?

I have recently heard the news that Duke Energy plans to set out a formal monitoring plan. Ok, that sounds good, but, in reality, any "company procedure" can be changed at any time with the dash of pen. There is no law that requires a company to go over and beyond the regulatory law. And no regulatory law, that I know of, that holds their feet to the fire on keeping their own policies/procedures static. Companies often change their policies in the interest of saving money to meet budget cutbacks. Their promises for the future are only promises.

Additionally, the DOT branch that oversees the monitoring of these commercial transmission lines, the DOT PHMSA, is in a "shake up" of administrative personnel. So, the very entity that is the "watchdog" of pipeline safety is in an unstable situation at this time! Given this situation, how can we expect precise attention to this matter? I don't want to digress into too much detail here, but, as the law is written for monitoring these pipelines, it looks like a "slap on the wrist" for infractions. "Warning and 30 day response times for discovered problems"....and so forth. Disaster explosions from 30" Natural Gas Transmission Lines that have happened are still "under investigation"!

If a US citizen breaks a law, does it remain "under investigation" with no consequences? The simple answer, of course, is NO. Citizens have to answer and go to court and pay the consequences of their actions. Apparently, corporations don't have to follow these same rules. This is a distressing paradox, as the action of a corporate entity providing energy resources has the ability to affect so many people in the event of a disastrous explosion.

It doesn't take much searching of the internet to find out that natural gas transmission disasters are continual and recent. Two major explosions in January and April of 2016. Whatever the song and dance of Duke Energy, there is no assurance for the prevention of another disaster of this kind in our hometown of Cincinnati.

Forget the Terrorists! Why worry about Terrorists when our own government agencies are putting their citizens in harm's way for the sake of corporate wealth. Why worry about a bomb on a plane when the potential bomb is in

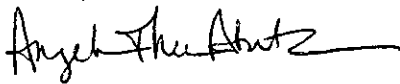
your backyard? What has happened to our constitutional rights to life and the pursuit of happiness (which includes SAFETY) in our own homes?

We, like many of our neighbors have been faithful to Duke Energy to provide service to our homes and businesses. But maybe that can change. We have decided to change our energy carrier and perhaps many more will follow suit in the knowledge that Duke Energy is not serving the best interest of their residential public client base.

Most U.S. Citizens follow all the rules and pay the taxes to keep our government system afloat. And part of that tax goes to the salaries government officials receive to protect us. Unfortunately, we are not being protected by the very officials elected and sworn to protect us. This is absolutely inexcusable.

Unfortunately, lawsuits brought by US citizens to protect their own environmental health are not uncommon in this country. But, WHY should the American People have to sue private corporate entities to protect themselves? The saddest part is the American people are losing trust in their own government system, and I understand why. Our government system has lost touch with the people it's sworn to protect. The almighty dollar is taking precedence over the people. When our elected as well as appointed officials cannot keep their vow to uphold our constitutional rights, we have a dire future to look forward to.... for ourselves, our children and generations to follow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Thea Abitz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Angela Thea Abitz

Tangleridge Subdivision

3767 Fallentree Lane

Blue Ash, Ohio 45256

cc: Senator Jonathan Dever, Ohio General Assembly, House of Representatives, Columbus, 28th District

cc: Elizabeth Rueve-Miller, a Founding Member of Neighbors Opposing Pipeline Extension Organization (N.O.P.E),
Cincinnati, Ohio