

March 14, 2003

Honorable Donald L. Evans  
Secretary of Commerce  
Herbert C. Hoover Building  
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

2003 MAR 26 AM 11:07

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing in support of an appeal submitted by Islander East, LLC to overturn the October 15, 2002 denial by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding proposed construction of the Islander East pipeline.

I agree with Islander East's position that -- contrary to the conclusion reached by the DEP -- the project is in fact consistent with the requirements of Connecticut's federally approved Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM), which is designed to balance our nation's energy interests with the protection of the state's environment.

In respect to environmental concerns, the pipeline's sponsors have taken extraordinary care to minimize environmental impact of the pipeline, thus fulfilling their obligations under the CZM.

Islander East will employ minimally invasive, horizontal direct drilling (HDD) technology that minimizes the need to dig a trench in portions of the pipeline route. This HDD technology -- which will be used for the maximum feasible distance of approximately 4,000 feet out from the Connecticut shoreline -- allows Islander East to dig a single hole and tunnel underground horizontally. It is a technique that has been embraced by such well-regarded, environmental conservation organizations as the Long Island Pine Barrens Society and the Nature Conservancy for helping to significantly reduce the pipeline's impact to the Pine Barrens' core preservation area.

Project sponsors will place the pipeline beneath the ocean floor, causing minimum disturbance to near-shore shellfish beds or any other environmentally sensitive areas. Furthermore, offshore construction activity will take place during winter months, when shellfish are less active and less susceptible to disturbance.

Regarding energy-related matters, the Islander East pipeline will help address national and regional energy needs in a number of positive ways.

Long Island's energy shortage is at a critical stage. The New York Independent System Operator -- the not-for-profit corporation that administers the state's wholesale energy market -- has determined that the only solution to Long Island's long-term energy needs is to develop "on-island" generation. The organization has concluded that new sources of natural gas are needed immediately to power electric plants proposed to meet this need and to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. Further, the Islander East pipeline will help solve pressing, energy-related issues at the regional and interstate level by insuring a more fully integrated pipeline system.

The Islander East pipeline thus clearly fulfills the twin goals of the Coastal Zone Management Program. It balances regional and national energy interests with the need to protect the environment.

I therefore respectfully request that the Commerce Department make a judgment in favor of this position by rejecting the DEP denial and ruling that the Islander East pipeline complies with Connecticut's CZM.

Sincerely yours,



Marsha Z. Laufer  
178 Old Field Road  
Setauket, New York 11733  
(631) 751-4802