

STATEMENT BY JOHN F. O'REILLY, VICE-PRESIDENT,
BRIARCLIFF MANOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO

NATIONAL OCEANIC and ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Public Hearing
Tarrytown Hilton, November 13, 2002

Good morning, my name is John F. O'Reilly, and I'm here as the Vice-President of the Briarcliff Manor School Board to speak in support of the determination by the NY State Secretary of State that the proposed Millennium Pipeline is inconsistent with law and should therefore not be permitted to cross Haverstraw Bay and cut through Westchester County. I want to first thank NOAA for coming to Westchester County and providing the community the opportunity to address you first hand on this issue, which has great importance to our community as a whole and in particular, to our school community. We know that your task today is to consider the ecological and environmental damage that the proposed pipeline will inflict. There are many, many people who will detail for you those harmful impacts.

I want to bring to your attention the fact that the pipeline will cause grave impacts to the learning environment of the Briarcliff Manor elementary school, the Briarcliff Manor High School and the Briarcliff Manor Middle School. The tremendously harmful effect on our students and staff and the need to prevent same was the subject of discussion by the New York State Schools Boards Association members on October 26, 2002 at its annual convention in Syracuse, New York. The State School Boards Association serves as the statewide voice of more than 700 boards of education and has approximately 5,000 school board members. I was the Briarcliff Manor School District delegate to the convention.

School Board members from across the State were asked to consider whether the organization should dedicate its resources to lobby for legislation at the State and/or federal level to require that high pressure natural gas pipelines, like the Millennium Pipeline, should be required by law to be at least 1500 feet from a school

facility. Now, I have to tell you that the resolution to have NYSSBA as an organization to support such legislation was not recommended for adoption by the Resolutions Committee. However, on the floor of the convention, school board members from all across the State stood to support such legislation, citing our situation in Briarcliff as a demonstration of the need for such a law. Board members from Oswego County, Tompkins County and Schoharie County spoke of the overwhelming harmful impact to an appropriate learning environment that a high pressure gas pipeline presents, particularly in the post Sept. 11th environment. The School Board members were especially upset that school children do not have the status under the law as does Haverstraw Bay and its environment, not to say that those issues are not important, but rather that school children deserve at least the same attention as the environmental issues.

The school board delegates voted by an overwhelming majority to support legislation to require the 1,500 foot buffer between a high pressure gas pipeline and a school facility, and the statewide School Boards Association will be undertaking this legislative effort. I told the school board members at the convention that I am confident that our friends from NOAA and the federal DOC will take into account the needs of a safe learning environment in their deliberations on the Millennium Pipeline. I am confident that you will find the placement of the pipeline to within 75 feet of our 800 student elementary school and to within 350 feet of our 900 student middle/high school facility must not be allowed to happen.

Thank you.