

Hunterdon Board Director Calls For Biden Administration To Change Course And Oppose Eminent Domain Abuse

Hunterdon County Board of County Commissioners Director Susan J. Soloway has called on New Jersey's Governor and federal representatives to ask President Joseph Biden to the reverse the decision of the U.S. Justice Department in support the Penn East Pipeline's appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court that would allow the company to take state preserved farmland and open space through eminent domain.

Soloway, in a letter to Governor Phil Murphy, U.S. Senators Bob Menendez and Cory Booker, and Congressman Tom Malinowski, wrote, "The Third Circuit ruling prevents the abuse of eminent domain, which Hunterdon County's Board has long opposed, and the doctrine of sovereign immunity, which protects states' rights, and should not be overturned.

The planned pipeline route disturbs a fifty-three acre well service area in Holland Township and over 2,000 acres of Hunterdon County farmland and conservation easements for which the taxpayers have paid millions of dollars to preserve, thereby destroying the easements.

President Biden may not be aware of the serious issue of allowing Penn East to take land that state and county taxpayers have paid to preserve and the negative affect of using eminent domain to interfere with farmland in the county."

Soloway added, "Please make every effort to advise the Biden Administration of these facts and recommend a reversal of the decision to support the Penn East Pipeline company's U.S. Supreme Court appeal."

Congressman Tom Malinowski, in response to Director Soloway's letter, joined Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman in a joint media release, stating, "Whatever its views on the legal issues raised by this case, we urge the (Biden) Administration to stand with our constituents, with New Jersey, and with its stated commitment to environmental protection in opposing this unnecessary pipeline."

Hunterdon County's Freeholder and now Commissioner Board has long opposed the pipeline company's use of eminent domain to take preserved farmland and open space for the path of the gas pipeline.