

## **PennEast Pipeline Threat To Hunterdon's Preserved Farmland Ends**

After years of resistance by residents, local officials, and the Hunterdon County Board of Commissioners, it was announced this week that the PennEast Pipeline company has dropped its plan to take private property, including Hunterdon County farmland preserved by the taxpayers, to build a pipeline traversing the County

Board of Commissioners Deputy Director John E. Lanza stated, "The decision ending PennEast's effort to condemn and destroy easements, for which county taxpayers had already paid millions of dollars to purchase, is welcome news. The Commissioner Board has long opposed the taking by PennEast.

Over fifty County preserved farm properties were at risk as the pipeline company pursued the use of eminent domain through the Courts. Taxpayer funds were used to preserve these farm acres from development, and, in our opinion, that means any and all development, including a pipeline structure that would disturb a significant portion of the preserved land."

Lanza noted, "On September 24<sup>th</sup> PennEast submitted an eminent domain dismissal notice to U.S. District Court Judge Brian Martinotti for every Hunterdon County property it initially sought to take.

While Judge Martinotti has not yet issued the dismissal order, it is expected to be approved by the Judge according to attorneys representing the County, private property owners, and non-profit environmental groups."

Timothy Duggan, an attorney with the Lawrenceville law firm Stark and Stark, who has represented the County and other entities interests in the pipeline litigation, said of the action by PennEast, "I believe this means the project is dead."