

**Testimony before Public Input Hearing  
of the Public Utility Commission  
July 14, 2008**

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Your Honor, I have been a resident of Springfield Township for the past six years. I serve as Chairman of the Concerned Democrats of Springfield Township and am an elected Auditor for Springfield Township. I began my political involvement here in Springfield, initially spurred by concerns about our national direction. However, I soon grasped that old principle that “all politics is local,” and that building toward national change also requires participation in local contests and issues. I learned that here in Springfield, an individual’s commitment to the community is more significant to the citizens than is his or her party affiliation. I came to understand, in fact, that townships such as Springfield literally could not exist without the willingness of **volunteers** who give their time and energy to preserve Open Space and native species, to protect our watersheds, to develop land-use plans, to preserve our history and heritage...even to clean up roadside litter. I hope that my remarks will support the accomplishment of these dedicated volunteers.

Others have spoken and will speak of the valuable and fragile environment which is under threat from PPL’s preferred cross-country route. PPL contends that their choice represents the least cost to ratepayers...and no doubt provides the best return to PPL’s shareholders.

I would like to remind the Commission that the calculated costs of this proposed construction project conveniently ignore the less-knowable costs of environmental and social damage which may occur in the longer term. The consequences of decisions made in the name of short-term corporate profit are often paid for down the road - usually from the public purse or, even worse, with lost or ruined lives.

The huge tanker Exxon-Valdez was no doubt designed to maximize throughput and minimize cost in the transportation of oil. However, when it ran aground in Prince William Sound, the destruction of wildlife and fisheries was nearly incalculable. We recently saw in news reports that, after a 20-year legal battle, the people whose livelihoods were destroyed by this disaster will **never** be adequately compensated for their losses.

Offshore drilling and development along the Mississippi Gulf Coast has led directly to the erosion of the delta wetlands. These wetlands had served as a buffer against hurricane storm surges, but were rendered inadequate to stop the fury when Hurricane Katrina made landfall. The entire nation watched as New Orleans, betrayed by this and other failures, drowned. *Volunteers still struggle to help rebuild that city.*

For years the oil, natural gas and coal industries, the automakers and, yes, the electric companies have persuaded our political leaders to ignore threats that global warming,

climate change and violent weather would be the consequence of unbridled burning of fossil fuels. This very spring and summer have seen unprecedented storms which have left our mid-West flooded and devastated, with crops threatened and homes and businesses destroyed. *Who will bear the cost of higher food prices and rebuilding? Once again, it will fall to the public, to the volunteers.*

So...what if the Upper Tohickon riparian buffer is damaged? If downstream communities are flooded, who will pay for recovery? If the groundwater is contaminated by pesticides, or if the aquifer can no longer recharge itself, who will pay for new wells or to construct a new water distribution system to serve affected homeowners? ***The Public Purse? The Private Citizens? The Volunteers? I'll wager that it will not be PPL.***

We ignore and abuse our environment at great peril. Our Springfield volunteers understand this. They work for the good of our community, and for the benefit of its current and future residents. I hope that the Public Utility Commission will honor their efforts with an equally far-sighted decision.

Thank you.