



Statement on Pipeline Explosion in Beaver County

In the wake of a pipeline explosion in Beaver County Monday, Doug Metcalfe, candidate for State Representative from the 128th District, called for an immediate halt to all pipeline construction until safety concerns are “fully addressed”.

Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) and Sunoco, which built the Beaver County pipeline that exploded, is currently constructing the Mariner East 2 Pipeline, which goes through the 128th District in Lancaster and Berks counties.

“The Monday morning pipeline explosion in Beaver County is a scary reminder that pipelines fail,” said Metcalfe. “This incident highlights the safety concerns, lack of oversight, and communication issues related to the Mariner East 2 pipeline that have been brought up time and again by me and other concerned residents in 128th district. We cannot trust ETP and Sunoco to guarantee the safety of citizens, schools, communities, wells, streams and the environment near these pipelines.”

While we should all be grateful no one was hurt Monday, Metcalfe said, the explosion destroyed a home, two garages and several automobiles in Beaver County. Twenty-five to thirty homes were evacuated; schools were closed; an interstate highway was shut; and local power lines and

towers fell, leaving 1,500 households without power. The Beaver County pipeline went on line just one week ago. The exact cause of the explosion is not yet known.

Pipeline explosions have the potential to be far worse, Metcalfe warned. He said that, as he travels around the 128th District, he finds residents concerned about the threat the Mariner East 2 pipeline poses to the safety of their families and the quality of the water and the local environment. The Mariner 2 pipeline directly affects communities, schools, homes, farms, forests, and streams in Cumru, Brecknock, Robeson, New Morgan, and Caernarvon townships. The pipeline passes very close to several schools in our area. “As an elected School Director, I have heard from concerned parents that they are very worried about the impact of the pipeline in such close proximity to schools.”

Metcalfe has repeatedly criticized the fast pace of the pipeline expansion in the 128th District and throughout Pennsylvania and the lack of regulatory oversight. The Mariner East pipeline project has been cited and fined repeatedly, as well as shut down twice during this construction for egregious and willful violations. More than 50 spills and leaks have fouled streams and tainted wells. These fines have been inconsequential to this \$2.5 billion project. For Dallas-based, ETP, Metcalfe said, “The fines have become a regular cost of doing business.”

As pipeline construction has soared in the Commonwealth, the General Assembly has failed the citizens of Pennsylvania by not adequately funding the state agencies responsible for overseeing the construction, operation and maintenance of these miles and miles of pipelines, Metcalfe said. The regulatory process to review and enforce pipeline expansion is fragmented and underfunded.

Metcalfe said that the State legislature must fulfill its responsibility to fund the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Public Utility Commission (PUC) so that they can appropriately monitor pipeline construction, maintenance, and operations. In addition, the government and ETP need to facilitate better communication with citizens, local governments, schools and our first responders need to be trained and prepared should there be an accident.

“We should be focused on supporting the local communities and property owners that have been impacted by the pipeline construction and operation,” Metcalfe said. “Before ground is broken, the state must determine what the environmental impact of any pipeline will be and how those effects can be minimized. And, of course, the Commonwealth must ensure communities and citizens are kept informed and safe during the construction and operation of the pipelines.”

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