

New Jersey Pinelands and South Jersey Gas Pipeline

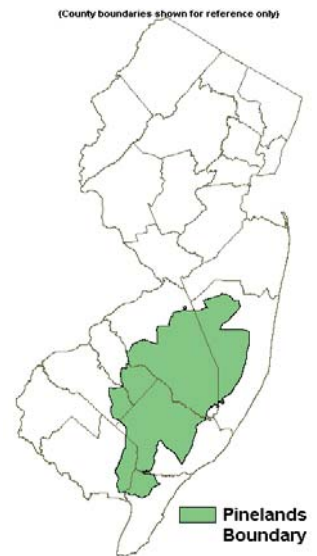
The 1.1 million-acre National Reserve protects the globally rare Pine Barrens ecosystem, home to plants and animals found nowhere else in the United States. One of the largest freshwater aquifers in the United States can be found within the sandy soils of the Pinelands.

Pinelands National Reserve: A National Reserve is not a National Park. It is a landscape where people live and work. Some areas are designated for conservation and some are designated for development. This is done through a set of rules called the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

Pinelands Commission: When the Pinelands Protection Act was passed in 1979, it established a 15-member independent public body known as the Pinelands Commission. The Commission is responsible for enforcing the CMP.

Pinelands Commission Members: Seven Commissioners are appointed by the Governor, with advice and consent of the Senate. Seven members are appointed from each of the seven counties with land in the New Jersey Pinelands region. These counties are Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Ocean County. The final member is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and serves as the federal representative. All Commissioners are unpaid volunteers.

County Appointees to the Commission: County members are appointed by the county Board of Chosen Freeholders. Cumberland County's representative for the last 18 years was Leslie Ficcaglia, but on April 22, 2014 she was replaced. She was the only county appointee to vote "no" on the South Jersey Gas pipeline project. The Cumberland County Freeholders appointed Jane Jannarone, a local business owner and former Cumberland County freeholder. Ms. Ficcaglia had no notice that she would be replaced. (You can find the full list of Pinelands Commissioners at www.state.nj.us/pinelands/about/memb.)



The South Jersey Gas Pipeline

South Jersey Gas, the gas utility for the southern-most part of New Jersey, wants to put a 22-mile natural gas pipeline through the Pinelands National Reserve, in violation of the rules that protect the Pinelands. It would go through the Forest Management Areas of Cumberland, Atlantic and Cape May County to the B.L. England Plant at Beesley's Point, Upper Township, Cape May.

The Power Plant: The B.L. England Plant at Beesley's Point, on the Great Egg Harbor, was built in 1961 and burns coal and oil. It is under orders to close down or convert to natural gas, and for the past several years has only operated for peak demand.

Why is the Pipeline a Problem for the Pinelands? The proposed pipeline violates the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The CMP only permits infrastructure like gas pipelines in the Forest Management Area if it is "intended to primarily serve the needs of the Pinelands" – that is, only if needed for the towns and villages within the Pinelands. N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.23. To the extent it operates at all, the B.L. England plant primarily serves demand outside the Pinelands, where the great majority of residences and businesses in our region are located. There is no exception for pipes run along or under roads. **This is to protect against the immediate harms this type of construction brings to forests and wetlands. It also protects against future development of the Forest Area that these projects bring in their wake.**

What Impact Will the Pipeline Have on the Pinelands? In addition to weakening the Pinelands protection plan, the proposed pipeline would go along populated roads and under Mill Creek, the Tuckahoe River and Cumberland Pond. Any accidents, errors or failures during and after construction would impact county residents and natural resources.

How Would Approval of the Pipeline Impact the Pinelands? The survival of New Jersey's Pinelands is entirely dependent on the regulations that were created to protect it in the first place. The Pinelands Commission would have to waive the rules of the CMP in order to allow this pipeline to go through the Forest Area. **If the Commission can't uphold their own rules, then no one will!** Proposals to build pipelines like this one are increasing. This will not be the last project looking for an exception to the rules. The future of the natural resources found in the Pinelands are at risk.

Where Do Things Stand? In January 2014 the Commission declined to pass a resolution that would have waived the rules of the CMP and allowed South Jersey Gas to build the pipeline. The final vote was tied 7-7 and they needed 8 votes in favor for the project to move forward. **But now the Commission is under a lot of pressure to overturn this decision.** In March 2014 South Jersey Gas appealed the Commission's decision to the Superior Court of New Jersey. **And now three of the seven Commissioners who voted "no" on the pipeline have either been replaced or are in danger of being replaced.**

Will Shutting Down B.L. England Harm South Jersey's Electrical Supply? The simple answer is "no," because that's not how the electrical grid works. According to the Director of the Center for Energy, Economic & Environmental Policy at Rutgers University, there are procedures in place to make sure there aren't reliability problems when plants retire. PJM Interconnection, an independent entity chartered by the federal government, is responsible for maintaining the electrical grid. Whenever one plant leaves the grid, other suppliers fill the gap because it is profitable to sell power into the grid. The Atlantic City Press, on March 22, 2014, quoted Paula Dupont-Kidd, a PJM spokeswoman who said "At this point, PJM does not know what effect the closing of B.L. England and Oyster Creek would have, but they won't be an issue."

Take Action to Protect the Pinelands:

The Cumberland County Board of Freeholders removed their representative on the Commission in April. Leslie was the only County representative to vote "no" on the pipeline. Now Governor Christie has made nominations to replace two Pinelands Commissioners, Robert Jackson and D'Arcy Rohan Green, who voted against the South Jersey Gas pipeline deal.

- 1. Call the following Senators on the Senate Judiciary Committee and ask them to block the nominations of Dennis Roohr and Robert S. Barr. It is particularly helpful if you live in the counties listed after each Senator below.**
 - Senator Scutari, Chair, 908-587-0404 – Middlesex, Somerset, Union Counties
 - Senator Gill, Vice Chair, 973-509-0388 – Essex and Passaic
 - Senator Bateman, 908-526-3600 - Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset
 - Senator Lesniak, 908-624-0880 – Union
 - Senator Pou, 973-247-1555 – Bergen and Passaic
 - Senator Smith, 732-752-0770 – Middlesex and Somerset
 - Senator Weinberg, 201-928-0100 –Bergen
 - Senator Sarlo, 201-804-8118 – Bergen and Passaic
- 2. If you live in District 6, 7, or 8 please call Senator Allen, Senator Beach, or Senator Addiego and ask them to exercise Senatorial Courtesy and block the nomination of Dennis Roohr of Cookstown.**
 - Senator Addiego (609) 654-1498
 - Senator Beach (856) 429-1572
 - Senator Allen (856) 314-8835

To find your representative click here <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp>
For more information visit our website at www.pinelandsalliance.org