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Rally Opposing 23-Mile Gas Pipeline Extension

A rally was held in Mineola by opponents of a natural gas pipeline extension plan. A private company wants to build the Williams Pipeline, a 23-mile extension of an existing pipeline that would bring in natural gas. It would extend from New Jersey, across New York Harbor and to the Rockaways. Opponents say they are concerned about potential environmental damage that could result. They are fearful of the climate and water impacts, as well as the impact on the communities along the shore.

National Grid says the pipeline is desperately needed. It recently instated a moratorium on new gas installations and says it cannot meet the demand. Some people in the area say National Grid's moratorium on new gas hookups is hurting Long Island's economy. Major housing projects have been out on hold and in many communities new businesses can't open because they can't get natural gas service. National Grid claims its shortage of natural gas is real and not an attempt to gain support for the project, while opponents say that it is just a ploy. The private company has been turned down twice by New York State for a permit, but it has now applied a third time. Protesters say they want Gov. Andrew Cuomo to make sure the company is turned down again.

Suffolk Water Authority Outlines a 6-year Plan to Remove Toxins From Drinking Water

The Suffolk County Water Authority is looking to ease concerns over its ability to detect and remove potential cancer-causing toxins from Long Island's drinking water. It outlined a six-year action plan to deal with contaminants in the drinking water before the Suffolk County Legislature's Environmental Committee.

PFOS and PFOA are chemicals used in firefighting foam and other flame-retardant products. It is removed with carbon granulation. 1, 4 dioxane, a byproduct found in personal care products and in industrial solvents, is more difficult to remove from the water and requires brand-new technology called advanced oxidation process, or AOP. New York State was the first in the nation to set a maximum contaminant level at 1 part per billion (ppb).

The Suffolk County Water Authority says it has 31 wells that will need to be treated for 1,4 dioxane, but that number can change. It's estimated to cost roughly \$75 million just to install the systems. A portion of that money will come from state funding, but the water authority believes it will have to charge customers \$100 more a year to pay for the filtration systems. Water authority officials claim besides the funding, the New York State Department of Health has been too slow to approve permits for the 1, 4 dioxane filtration system.

Environmentalists say the six-year plan is six years too long, but water authority officials say that time is needed to get the funding to install filtration systems in the wells across Suffolk. The authority hopes to start implementing the removal of the contaminants by early 2020.

Thousands of Fish Found Dead in Shinnecock Bay

Tens of thousands of Bunker Fish were found dead in Shinnecock Bay in a one-week span in early September. They were found in three different parts of the body of water. Officials say it looks like they suffocated due to a lack of oxygen. Dr. Chris Gobler, a professor at Stony Brook University, says during evening hours, oxygen levels can get down to 1 milligram per liter. "The DEC would tell you they want to see at least three (milligrams per liter)."

Scientists say nitrogen from fertilizers and antiquated septic tanks makes its way into the waters and ultimately depletes oxygen levels. "People have on-site septic tanks and those add more nitrogen," says Gobler. "That then elevates algae levels, which then create an oxygen demand. There's a big initiative now to reduce nitrogen from septic tanks. This is just one more reason we would want to do that."

The Bunker Fish, also known as Menhaden, migrate in large schools along the East Coast and are a food supply for larger predatory fish. There have been several of these fish kills in recent years including in 2015 in the Peconic River in Riverhead.