

WOOLMAN HILL Quaker Retreat Center

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PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING THE PROPOSED TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE

Woolman Hill Quaker Retreat Center joins with other communities, organizations and individuals in opposing the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline through Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and in calling for sustainable solutions to energy needs.

In addition to significant concerns about the danger, environmental destruction and economic disturbance posed to Woolman Hill by the pipeline's proposed route across our land, we carry equal concern for the broader implications of the pipeline's regional and global impact. We have found no convincing demonstration that New England needs more natural gas pipelines for its residences, businesses, or power plants. Tennessee Gas has not denied that a large portion of the gas to be transported through the pipeline is for export to foreign countries. Exporting fossil fuels depletes a finite resource, increases dependence on non-renewable energy elsewhere in the world, and contributes to greenhouse gas emission levels that further damage the earth's ability to support humans and other animal and plant species.

Situated on the beautiful Pocumtuck ridge in Deerfield, our retreat center emphasizes the importance of reflection, spiritual engagement, and connection with nature. We provide simple, comfortable facilities for individual retreats, group gatherings and programs that nurture spiritual growth and foster peace-making, simplicity, integrity, social responsibility, and stewardship of the earth.

Beginning with Antoinette Spruyt's original intent to "further the causes of peace and brotherhood in the world" when she donated the land to Quakers in the 1950s, Woolman Hill has a long history of advocacy and witness in western Massachusetts and beyond. It has served as the locus of peace conferences, international youth work camps, an alternative school, the birthplace of Traprock Peace Center, the home of war tax resisters Juanita and Wally Nelson, and innumerable spiritual and social justice events.

Consistent with Woolman Hill's purpose and its Quaker values, we encourage lifestyles that reduce dependence on non-renewable energy and minimize negative impact on the earth. We acknowledge that fossil fuel and climate change issues are very complex, and that at this point in time we ourselves are often complicit with unsustainable environmental, economic, political and social systems. We grieve the destruction of the natural environment and of vulnerable communities due to human disregard for finite resources and for the sanctity of all life. We support the development of renewable and responsible energy systems which will allow us all to live sustainably on the earth.

We call on our local, state, and federal officials to promote sustainable energy use, to protect public conservation land and private landowners' rights, and to make decisions that prioritize the well-being of our natural environment and of future generations. We call on them to prevent the construction of the Tennessee Gas pipeline. May we all work towards furthering the causes of peace and kinship in the world.

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