

**TOWN OF WEST NEW YORK
COUNTY OF HUDSON**

RESOLUTION #R20-319

RE: OPPOSING CONSTRUCTION OF THE NJ TRANSIT GAS-FIRED POWER PLANT IN KEARNY, COUNTY OF HUDSON, NEW JERSEY AND SUPPORT FOR RELYING ON RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY TO POWER THE NEW JERSEY TRANSIT MICROGRID

WHEREAS, New Jersey Transit (“NJ Transit”) has proposed to construct a 140-megawatt, natural gas-fired power plant as part of the NJ TRANSITGRID Traction Power System, to be located along the Hackensack River in Kearny, New Jersey; and,

WHEREAS, funding for this \$546 million gas-fired power plant would be from taxpayer-funded federal and state monies, including a \$410 million federal grant related to Hurricane Sandy Recovery and Resiliency funds; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed NJ TRANSITGRID gas-fired power plant would be another long-term source of harmful air pollution that would annually emit into the air hundreds of tons of pollutants, including particulate matter, and toxic chemicals that contribute to the formation of acid rain, ozone, and smog, some of which are known carcinogens and are known to increase the severity of asthma and other respiratory diseases, all with the potential to impact northern New Jersey residents directly; and,

WHEREAS, particulate matter released into the air, once inhaled, can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects, and developing fetuses and children are uniquely vulnerable to exposures as they receive proportionally greater doses of pollutants than adults and have immature organs and detoxification systems; and,

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association acknowledges the hazards of natural gas infrastructure and associated adverse health impacts, and Bergen County, Hudson County, and Essex County (the Counties in the proximity of the location of the proposed NJ TRANSITGRID gas-fired power plant in Kearny) already receive grades of ‘F’ from the American Lung Association for ground level ozone pollution; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed NJ TRANSITGRID gas-fired power plant, if constructed, would become the 13th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in New Jersey, releasing 571,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gases into the atmosphere annually; and,

WHEREAS, NJ Transit is relying, in large part, on a six year old 2014 feasibility analysis performed by Sandia Laboratories to support the proposed NJ TRANSITGRID gas-fired power plant, notwithstanding the fact that natural gas is becoming an increasingly less attractive energy source because of the rapidly improving cost-effectiveness of renewable technologies, the demonstrated adverse impact of fossil fuels on our climate emergency, and the increased likelihood of fossil fuel infrastructures such as the proposed power plant becoming “stranded assets”, or an asset that becomes no longer viable economically during its life because of technological or economic changes; and,

WHEREAS, NJ Transit has failed to seriously explore present-day, viable alternative energy options to its proposed gas-fired power plant, including zero-emissions technologies like solar, wind, or tidal energy combined with battery energy storage, each of which, or in combination, would avoid the environmental and public health issues detailed above while still providing jobs, transportation resiliency, and other benefits to the public; and,

WHEREAS, once constructed, an energy grid that is based on alternative energy options would operate with zero emissions for the life of the facility, as opposed to the proposed gas fired power plant that would result in the significant adverse environmental impacts described above; and,

WHEREAS, while we support the goal of mass transit resiliency, the energy demand that NJ Transit asserts is required to power its microgrid project, including to power many of its trains, can be achieved by

utilizing cleaner alternatives and renewable energy systems at the proposed Kearny site and on other NJ Transit properties and equipment (e.g., solar, wind, and/or tidal energy systems) coupled with one or more energy storage systems (batteries, flywheels, and/or supercapacitors); and,

WHEREAS, NJ Transit's failure to seriously evaluate clean energy alternatives is in direct contradiction with several New Jersey laws and policies, including the state's Clean Air Act, 2018 Clean Energy Act which we applaud Governor Murphy for pursuing and the final 2019 Energy Master Plan's goal to achieve 100% clean energy economy-wide in New Jersey by 2050; and,

WHEREAS, the air pollution from the power plant would disproportionately harm low income and communities of color in Kearny, Newark, and Jersey City, which contradicts Governor Murphy's executive order to promote environmental justice; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed gas-fired power plant would require 1.3 million gallons of water per day that would come from the municipal potable water system, with approximately 90% of this water to be used to cool the steam-driven turbines and lost for consumption; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed gas-fired power plant's operation requires the use of chemicals such as ammonia, bleach, and acids that would increase the potential for spills into nearby wetlands and streams and the Hackensack River; and,

WHEREAS, the operation of the proposed gas-fired power plant, with its reliance on natural gas, would increase the demand for and volume of fracked natural gas, including the amount used in and transported to New Jersey, which also would increase the drilling and associated environmentally-destructive activities associated with its production and transport; and,

WHEREAS, it is not prudent to use Hurricane Sandy Recovery and Resiliency funding to pay for a gas-fired power plant that would increase greenhouse gas emissions, and thus increase the likelihood of more hurricanes, when New Jersey should be taking every action possible to safeguard our climate future and use renewable energy alternatives; and,

WHEREAS, New Jersey's Clean Energy Law establishes ambitious renewable energy standards by requiring the percentage of energy sold in the state from Class I renewable energy sources be 21 percent by 2020, 35 percent by 2025, and 50 percent by 2030, and utilizing cleaner alternatives for renewable energy systems will help meet these renewable energy standard as well as the Governor's goals of achieving 600 megawatts of energy storage capacity by 2021 and 2,000 megawatts by 2030, in contrast to building the proposed gas-fired power plant that will have an adverse impact on achieving those goals; and,

WHEREAS, we urge Governor Murphy to direct federal grants and relief funds towards energy solutions that will help achieve New Jersey's renewable energy and energy storage goals, not hinder them; and,

WHEREAS, NJ Transit has the opportunity to become a nationwide leader in both renewable energy and environmentally beneficial transit solutions, and it is incumbent upon the agency to make every effort to adopt renewable energy alternatives and energy storage to power the laudable resiliency goals for the microgrid related to the NJ TRANSITGRID project; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of West New York Green Team has urged the Mayor and Board of Commissioners to consider a resolution in support of this resolution; and,

WHEREAS, this resolution has been co-supported by many members of the "Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of West New York, having the responsibility and interest of protecting the health and safety of its residents,

businesses, and institutions, strongly oppose the use of the proposed gas-fired power plant to supply electricity for the NJ TRANSITGRID Traction Power System microgrid; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of West New York support a renewable energy source (e.g., solar, tidal, and/or wind energy) and energy storage systems (e.g., battery and/or flywheel) in place of a gas-fired power plant; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of West New York urge Governor Murphy to direct NJ Transit to immediately undertake a comprehensive engineering and economic analysis of the use of a combination of various integrated renewable energy and storage technology alternatives to power the NJTRANSITGRID Traction Power System microgrid and report back to the Governor and the public on the results of this analysis before it proceeds with the proposed gas-fired power plant; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk of the Town of West New York shall forward this Resolution to the following:

- 1) New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy - <https://www.nj.gov/governor/contact/>
- 2) NJ Transit Board of Commissioners - JZuczek@njtransit.com
- 3) NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine McCabe –
Catherine.McCabe@dep.nj.gov
- 4) State Senator Nicholas J. Sacco - SenSacco@NJLeg.org
- 5) State Assemblyperson Pedro Mejia - AswJimenez@njleg.org
- 6) State Assemblyperson Angelica Jimenez - AsmMejia@NJleg.org
- 7) Food & Water Watch - sdifalco@fwwatch.org
- 8) Hudson, Bergen, and Essex County Freeholders and Administration
 - a. Essex - ddavisford@freeholders.essexcountynj.org
 - b. Bergen - mamoroso@co.bergen.nj.us
 - c. Hudson - asantos@hcnj.us
- 9) League of New Jersey Municipalities, 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
- 10) The Jersey Journal

Adopted: September 23, 2020

I, Adelunny Plaza, Deputy Town Clerk, of the Town of West New York, County of Hudson, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of the above resolution adopted by the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of West New York at a meeting held on September 23, 2020

Adelunny Plaza, RMC, Deputy Town Clerk