

**TOWNSHIP OF WEEHAWKEN
COUNTY OF HUDSON
RESOLUTION # 166-2020**

RESOLUTION 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, NJ Transit has proposed to build a gas-fired power plant (“NJ TRANSITGRID Traction Power System”) in Kearny, New Jersey – one of the most densely populated areas in the country; and

WHEREAS, NJ Transit will use \$546 million of taxpayer money (\$410 million from a federal disaster relief grant and the rest from the NJ Transit trust fund) to construct this plant; and

WHEREAS, northern New Jersey already suffers from high levels of air pollution from eight fossil-fuel power plants, which are among the largest sources of such pollution in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, NJ Transit’s environmental impact statement estimates this power plant would emit at least 577,000 tons of greenhouse gases annually; and

WHEREAS, gas infrastructure facilities can emit toxic chemicals such as sulfur dioxide, mercury, benzene, and formaldehyde and are known to increase the severity of respiratory diseases; 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, hybrid microgrids – an energy system with a renewable energy/battery storage combination as the primary source of energy and a fossil fuel source upon depletion of the renewable option as the back-up source – have potentially better resiliency while eliminating nearly all air pollution emissions, but NJ Transit has not considered this alternative project; 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.

WHEREAS, US Senator Cory Booker cosponsored the Green New Deal, and Senator Bob Menendez cosponsored the Incentivizing Offshore Wind Power Act, both pieces of legislation intended for increased adoption of renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions; 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, upon taking office, Governor Murphy rejoined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a coalition of states committed to reducing carbon emissions that contribute to climate change; 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, the Township Council of Weehawken does not oppose NJ Transit's efforts to improve the resiliency of public transportation and recognizes the project will still create many jobs by using a hybrid microgrid solution instead of a gas-fired power plant; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of Weehawken has a principal responsibility to protect the health and safety of its residents as well as to ensure the prudent spending of tax dollars paid by its citizens; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Council of Weehawken, to protect its residents and businesses, opposes construction of this gas-burning NJ Transit power plant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we 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 NJ TRANSITGRID Traction Power System microgrid.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Clerk shall forward this resolution to Governor Phil Murphy, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Catherine McCabe, and NJ Transit Executive Director Kevin Corbett.

Introduced: Councilwoman Silvestri-Ehret

Second: Councilman Curtis

Gonzalez	aye
Silvestri-Ehret	aye
Lavagnino	aye
Curtis	aye
Turner	aye

CERTIFICATION

I, ROLA FARES, MUNICIPAL CLERK OF WEEHAWKEN, CERTIFY THE ABOVE TO BE A TRUE AND EXACT COPY OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2020



ROLA FARES, MUNICIPAL CLERK