Harness
RR1 Box 3
Kenna, West Virginia
26276-9708

Regional Director Midwest Region
Attention: Lisa Mandell
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ecological Service
5600 American Boulevard West
Suite 990
Bloomington, Minnesota 55437-1458

Re: USFWS Draft EIS concerning NiSource Gas
Transmission and storage
Draft Habitat Conservation Plan

Dear Lisa,

The very idea of a mile-wide corridor through 14 states for any reason is nightmarish. If the width were ten yards instead of a mile, the horror would be only a little less.

The current retail value of the plants that would be destroyed would probably surpass several years of NiSource "profits". Most wild animals have no monetary value, which is unfortunate. Should NiSource have to pay for every soubug, spider, salamander, shrew and nestling sparrow (and all the other creatures) killed for this monstrous proposed project, it would be abandoned forthwith.

The number of impacted threatened endangered, rare and otherwise "important" species seems to vary, but the number really does not matter. Entire ecosystems would be destroyed, including endangered and "common" species alike.

This proposed corridor precludes the implementation of national and regional wildlife corridors and high altitude climate change reserves planned along the length.

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Our private lands, national and state forests and other public lands already have enough scars from gas, oil, and electricity transmission systems and, more recently, giant wind turbines. Planted with exotic species and serving as transmission paths for invasive plant and animal species, these alien strips are eyesores to humans and destroyers of wild communities and watersheds.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Forest Service have an incredible body of research on water, plants and animals, dwarfed by that amassed by university undergraduates, graduate students and faculty, and by researchers at other government agencies and private foundations.

There is no question that forests, much agricultural land, waters, and essentially all ecosystems are in serious trouble. The Department of Interior needs to put its collective foot down and stop the destruction carried out in the name of jobs, corporate profits and political power.

The negative aspects of Marcellus and Utica (and other) shale hydrofracturing, collection, compression, processing, transmission and air and water pollution become more evident every day. The ecological and financial damage caused by haulage, road and pad construction, well drilling, stream depletion and "brine" disposal are obvious to "regular" citizens.

High voltage electric power transmission lines are equally dismal, inefficiently carrying their ill-gotten energy from giant wind turbines, nuclear plants and coal-fired power plants. Vast solar arrays are the newest problem energy source.

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We are killing the planet at an ever faster speed. We have the knowledge and resources to develop small scale solar, wind and geothermal energy sources. Using them in combination with energy conservation measures, retrofitting of existing buildings and construction of superefficient new buildings with green roofs, we can eliminate the need for massive long distance transmission.

Please do not allow this proposed NiSource transmission corridor to progress any farther. Deny any and all permits. Mitigation of the proposed destruction is impossible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marion Harless

Marion Harless

Comparative psychologist, wildlife biologist

Senior co-editor - Turtles: Perspectives and Research

695 pages, Wiley-Interscience