December 13, 2021

Secretary Ben Grumbles
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21230

Dear Secretary Grumbles:

We understand that Columbia Gas continues to pursue its controversial Eastern Panhandle Expansion Project. Most recently, the company applied for coverage under the Maryland State Programmatic General Permit (“Maryland General Permit-6”) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We request that the Maryland Department of the Environment urge the Army Corps to require Columbia Gas to apply for an individual federal permit for the proposed project, instead of reauthorizing it under Maryland General Permit-6. An individual permit will enable regulators to fully examine the impacts of this project. And it will allow the public—who have been deeply concerned about this project since it was first proposed—the opportunity to comment.

Columbia Gas’s pipeline has long been a cause of serious concern for the public and state and local governments. Members of the General Assembly have already sent two letters in opposition to the project—this is our third such letter. The project threatens resources of special importance, including the Potomac River, upon which six million people rely on for drinking water every day. Given that Maryland has banned fracking, it defies our state’s existing energy policy to bring the same public health risks to our residents by way of a pipeline. Moreover, enabling fossil fuel production runs counter to our state’s goals of increasing renewable energy production.

We believe this project would reverse course on our state’s efforts to protect the health of our residents and combat climate change.

We urge you to do everything within your power to urge the Army Corps to require Columbia Gas to apply for an individual federal permit for the project.

Sincerely,

Senator Brian Feldman
Senator Shelly Hettleman
Senator Ben Kramer
Senator Susan C. Lee
Senator Jim Rosapepe
Senator Will Smith
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
Senator Ron Young
Delegate Sandy Bartlett
Delegate Lisa Belcastro
Delegate Regina T. Boyce
Delegate Ben Brooks
Delegate Jon Cardin
Delegate Al Carr
Delegate Mark Chang
Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
Delegate Charlotte Crutcherfield
Delegate Eric Ebersole
Delegate Jessica Feldmark
Delegate Diana Fennell
Delegate Shaneka Henson
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo
Delegate Michele Guyton
Delegate Anne Healey
Delegate Terri Hill
Delegate Rachel Jones
Delegate Marc Korman
Delegate Mary Lehman
Delegate Robbyn Lewis
Delegate Brooke Lierman
Delegate Lesley Lopez
Delegate Sara Love
Delegate Eric Luedtke
Delegate David Moon
Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr
Delegate Edith J. Patterson
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Delegate Susie Proctor
Delegate Kirill Reznik
Delegate Sheila Ruth
Delegate Dana Stein
Delegate Vaughn Stewart
Delegate Jen Terrasa
Delegate Kriselda Valderrama
Delegate Alonzo Washington
Delegate Courtney Watson
Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins
Delegate Nicole Williams
Delegate Karen Lewis Young