



Mahaska County Board of Supervisors

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June 20, 2022

Iowa Utilities Board
1375 E Court Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

Re: Docket No. HLP-2021-0003

On behalf of the citizens of our county, the Mahaska Board of Supervisors strongly objects to the construction of a carbon dioxide pipeline proposed by Navigator Heartland Greenway LLC. As we learn more about the project and its consequences, we are firmly convinced that the project is not only unsafe, but unwise. We therefore urge the Board to deny a permit for the construction of this project.

As the Board knows, the source of Iowa's prosperity is not found in factories but our fields. This is especially true in Mahaska County where agriculture forms the backbone of our local economy. Any project that poses a risk to our farms should only be pursued for the most pressing matters of public concern. The proposed CO₂ pipeline is not such a project. Damage to our land begins at construction where valuable topsoil will be ruined and waterways destroyed. We have all heard the promises that any damage would be repaired but our experience with the Dakota Access Pipeline has taught us these promises ring hollow. According to a 2021 study by Iowa State University on the impact of the Dakota Access Pipeline, there was "extensive soil disturbance from construction activities had adverse effects on soil physical properties, which come from mixing of topsoil and subsoil, as well as soil compaction from heavy machinery."¹ Moreover, the project reduced crop yields in the right-of-way "by an average of 25% for soybeans and 15% for corn during the first and second crop seasons, compared to undisturbed fields." Once installed, the pipeline will limit the construction of future improvements, such as drainage tile or new buildings, if they are in the vicinity of the pipeline. We need to protect our land for future generations, not the profits of a private corporation.


The CO₂ pipeline not only presents a danger to our fields, but to our citizens as well. Compressed, liquified carbon dioxide poses a safety hazard to all. While the system may be designed to prevent leaks, it is a question of when, not if, an accident occurs. In the event of a pipeline rupture or leak, exposure to this odorless and colorless gas can lead to a variety of


¹ "Pipeline Study Shows Soil Compaction and Crop Yield Impacts in Construction Right-of-Way." College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, November 11, 2021. <https://www.cals.iastate.edu/news/releases/pipeline-study-shows-soil-compaction-and-crop-yield-impacts-construction-right-way>.

health problems, including death. For example, in 2020 the rupture of a pipeline carrying compressed carbon dioxide in Satartia, Mississippi sent 45 people in the hospital, nearly a quarter of the town's population. In our county, the proposed pipeline will put some of our most vulnerable at risk as it will pass dangerously close to Fremont Elementary School where young children will be put in danger. While our first responders will undoubtedly rise to the challenge, we should not put them or our citizens in needless danger. Even if the transportation of CO2 is safe, we also share concerns that storage of liquified carbon dioxide poses a danger itself in the form of an increased risk of earthquakes.

The project is also unwise. The construction of a pipeline through private farm ground over the objection of the owners is an abuse of the eminent domain process. Unlike public works such as roads which use eminent domain process, the pipeline does not serve the greater public good. Rather, the project only enriches its out-of-state owners at the expense of violating private property rights. If this were not enough, the cost of the project will largely be borne by the average citizen through the use of millions of dollars of tax credits. Additionally, the sequestration of carbon dioxide provides not discernable benefit to the consumer. Unlike the Dakota Access Pipeline which reduced the cost of transporting oil and thus benefited the consumer, the only financial benefit of the CO2 pipeline comes from government subsidies.

For these reasons, we urge the Board to deny the permit application filed by Navigator Heartland Greenway LLC. We trust that the Board will put the safety and prosperity of Iowans first and deny the application for a permit to construct a CO2 pipeline.


Mark Groenendyk, Chair

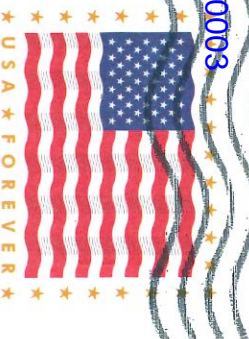

Steve Wanders, Vice-Chair


Chuck Webb, Board Member

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