Board of Chosen Freeholders

Ocean County
P.O. Box 2191

Toms River, NJ 08754-2191

Dear Freeholders Vicari, Little, Bartlett, Haines and Kelly,

 Our county is located in the Pinelands National Reserve – land that is protected by the federal and state government. It is truly miraculous that we have as much protected land as we do and this is due to the state’s Pinelands plan which regulates what can be built in which parts of this amazing and rare ecosystem.

 Like we are seeing elsewhere in America – gas pipelines are threatening our protected lands and water and Ocean County is no different.

 Unfortunately the state agency in charge of upholding the regulations that protect the Pinelands, the Pinelands Commission, has had a hard time doing that lately.

 In November 2016 the Appellate Division of New Jersey Superior Court found that the Pinelands Commission and Board of Public Utilities had improperly approved the controversial South Jersey Gas pipeline without review and approval by the full membership of the Pinelands Commission. The appeals were filed by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Sierra Club of New Jersey, and Environment New Jersey.

 **This means that the decision to approve the South Jersey Gas pipeline in Cumberland, Atlantic and Cape May Counties and the New Jersey Natural Gas pipeline in Burlington and Ocean Counties both must come back to the Pinelands Commission for a vote**.

Alan Avery is the Ocean County representative on the Pinelands Commission. He was selected by the Freeholders to serve in that position. The Freeholders should ask Commissioner Avery to support Ocean County’s interests and vote no on both these projects. They both violate the rules that protect the Pinelands National Reserve. They threaten the future of the Pinelands and our county because once these rules are weakened we can never go back.

 People will say that these projects aren’t a big deal, that they will go under the road, that no trees will get cut down and that they will be safe. But that isn’t the whole story. These pipelines go under waterways and have environmental impacts that I can’t live with. Pipelines are not infallible and they do explode. Please protect the health and well-being of Ocean County residents.

Sincerely,

{Your Name and Address}