

**West Whiteland Township Board of Supervisors
Statement on Pipeline Construction in Meadowbrook Manor
July 28, 2021**



Let's start by stating the obvious: Mariner East pipeline construction should not have taken place in Meadowbrook Manor in such close proximity to homes and operating pipelines.

However, we accept the reality that those pipelines will be installed in Meadowbrook Manor and in the few remaining areas in the Mariner East project. We state again, under Pennsylvania law, local governments like West Whiteland do not have any direct jurisdiction over where petroleum pipelines are located or how they are constructed.

At the same time, while [PUC](#) and [DEP](#) staff have authority over certain aspects of pipeline construction, we recognize that their authority is limited to enforcing regulations as they exist today. They cannot stop construction or the operation of existing pipelines simply because government officials or members of the public ask. Instead, they must follow the legal processes and regulatory standards in place to implement such an action, which also take into account the public utility law providing pipeline companies with certain legal rights. We express our gratitude to the state inspectors who have spent countless hours in Meadowbrook Manor and other neighborhoods in the Township doing as much as the law allows to ensure these pipelines are constructed safely.

Over the last few years, this Board has sent numerous letters to the PUC and other government officials asking for information or action to make Mariner East construction and operation safer. We have also been working cooperatively with Chester County to encourage state agencies once again to do what they can to protect our residents. We have avoided sending new Township letters into a "black hole" with the state, without expectation of different results.

Instead we want to focus on things that have a chance of making a difference.

- 1) The Township has allowed Energy Transfer to discharge groundwater from the Meadowbrook Manor construction site into our sanitary sewer system. This option was designed to expedite completion of construction and avoid additional stoppages while Energy Transfer was still using the auger bore. The time savings accomplished 2 things:
 - It helped to end a little bit sooner the enormous disruption and inconvenience of pipeline construction for the residents of Meadowbrook Manor;
 - and
 - It gets us closer to the possibility that Energy Transfer's old 8" and 12" pipelines will be taken out of service transporting natural gas liquids in West Whiteland, as they have in other parts of Pennsylvania where the new 16" and 20" pipelines are now in operation. We hope this happens as the new pipelines will be safer for transporting highly volatile natural gas liquids than the old pipelines.

- 2) The PUC is currently seeking comments as part of a rulemaking process for urgently needed pipeline safety regulations. We applaud State Senator Carolyn Comitta whose leadership was instrumental in getting this process started. Done right, the proposed amendments will be a step in the right direction.

This Board submitted preliminary comments and letters of support as part of this process, and we will continue to advocate for improved safety regulations. To that end, we have hired a consultant with expertise in this area to review the [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) and provide informed comments that we can submit to the PUC. We hope the community will join us in advocating for improved pipeline safety regulations. We will add information about how to comment to our website, as well as the comments that West Whiteland will submit through our consultant when they are ready.

- 3) West Whiteland will continue to provide accurate information about the remaining pipeline construction sites and share that with the community. We ask that everyone remain realistic about what we can manage, given staff limitations and lack of jurisdiction. We do our best to stay on top of this complicated project.

We also ask for calm. Neighborhood and local advocates have spent a lot of time calling attention to this dubious project and we hope they feel justly proud of that. But all stakeholders must work to ensure responsible, careful and accurate sharing of news and information. There were unfounded rumors and stories circulated in the community on Monday, June 26th, including completely inaccurate suggestions that residents needed to immediately evacuate homes. As stated in Township news flashes and updates posted on Monday, there was **NO** hazmat incident or leak on Monday at the Briar Road pipeline construction in Meadowbrook Manor. Pipeline workers wore fire retardant safety gear, as required by their work protocols, when Energy Transfer installed stress and strain gauges on the nearby operating pipelines. These gauges are a welcome and needed safety measure, as they provide early warning of vibration or stress on the existing lines. The gauge installation was an action to support public and community safety—**NOT** an indication of a leak or any need to evacuate the area. The rumors and stories being spread were factually in error and caused Township staff and law enforcement to spend additional time and resources to correct the record, and to calm understandably concerned residents.

Energy Transfer's pipeline construction has been underway for four years now in West Whiteland. Our community has been ground zero for far too many incidents and violations during that time. We share the frustration and concern expressed by so many about these pipelines. We sympathize with the residents who have had to put up with the eyesore of construction sites and the unreasonable amount of noise and vibration throughout our community. This week, we join in the hope that pipeline construction is finally nearing an end in Meadowbrook Manor and look forward to the day when Mariner East construction is completely done throughout West Whiteland.