



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Tish O'Dell, Ohio Community Organizer

[440-552-6774](tel:440-552-6774)

tish@celdf.org

WATERVILLE RESIDENTS BAN PIPELINES AND COMPRESSOR STATIONS THROUGH ADOPTING COMMUNITY BILL OF RIGHTS

City joins growing numbers of Ohio communities banning harmful fracking related activities

WATERVILLE, OH: Today the voters in Waterville overwhelmingly approved the *Waterville Community Bill of Rights* Charter Amendment by a vote of 62% to 38%. Waterville joins a growing number of communities throughout Ohio and the U.S. that are codifying their right to clean air, water, local democratic decision-making, and sustainability. The City's Charter Amendment prohibits the Nexus pipeline and a proposed compressor station as violations of these rights.

Both projects threaten residents and local ecosystems. The pipeline risks leaks and explosions, and the compressor station would cause harm through polluting emissions and noise.

Residents sought a remedy to stop these threats through their local elected officials, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the Ohio EPA. Finding none, they requested the support of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) to help protect themselves.

As residents came together to safeguard their own health, safety, and welfare, opposition from the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development groups came out in force. Some were from outside the City. Residents were undaunted and understood no one else was going to protect them.

According to Cheryl Bourland, a member of the community group Protecting Air Waterville (PAW), "Once we heard the facts at an Ohio EPA Air Permit hearing about the chemicals that would be released annually into the air we breathe, we knew we had to stop this. What we were shocked to learn was that *all* levels of government told us we *didn't have the right* to stop the pipeline. We disagree. That is why we advanced our Community Bill of Rights. A pipeline company's profits should never be considered above the health and safety of the people in a community."

Kelly Jacobs, a mother and member of PAW, stated, “I was astounded when I heard our Community Bill of Rights referred to as ‘unconstitutional.’ I was taught that in a democracy the power came from the people and that we do have the right to pass laws. Complacency will not facilitate change. I wanted to show my children that we have a voice. Sometimes you have to be the match that starts fire – perhaps Standing Rock is just the beginning.”

Ohio Communities Not Alone

Ohio residents are advancing Community Rights as part of the broader Community Rights Movement building across the United States. Local communities and state Community Rights Networks are partnering with CELDF to advance fundamental democratic and environmental rights. They are working with CELDF to establish Community Rights and the Rights of Nature in law, and prohibit extraction, fracking, factory farming, water privatization, and other industrial activities as violations of those rights. Communities are joining together within and across states, working with CELDF to advance systemic change - recognizing our existing system of law and governance as inherently undemocratic and unsustainable.

Additional Information

For additional information on Waterville, contact CELDF at info@celdf.org. To learn about the Ohio Community Rights Network, visit ohiocrn.org. To learn about the Community Rights Movement, visit www.celdf.org.

About CELDF — Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit, public interest law firm providing free and affordable legal services to communities facing threats to their local environment, local agriculture, local economy, and quality of life. Its mission is to build sustainable communities by assisting people to assert their right to local self-government and the rights of nature.