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Senate of Pennsylvania

SENATOR
JUDY WARD
30TH DISTRICT

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senatorjudyward.com

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. DeFrank, Chairman
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street, 3rd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Proposed extension of bi-directional service on the Laurel Pipeline
PUC Docket No. C-2025-3053018
Monroe Energy, LLC, Lucknow-Highspire Terminals, LLC, Sheetz, Inc. and PBF Holding Company LLC v. Laurel Pipeline Company, LLC

Dear Chairman DeFrank:

I am writing to express profound concerns on behalf of the residents, consumers and businesses in my legislative district and across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding the proposed bi-directional service on the Laurel Pipeline. The Initial Decision, issued by a Public Utility Commission ("PUC") Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") on January 14, 2026, dismisses the local interests and need for regulatory oversight. Therefore, I respectfully recommend rejecting the ALJ decision in its entirety or approve a plan agreed upon by both sides, if possible.

The Laurel Pipeline is the last remaining large-volume pipeline capable of transporting petroleum products from eastern Pennsylvania to the major central and western Pennsylvania markets. Currently, Buckeye Partners, through its local affiliate Laurel Pipeline (collectively, "Laurel-Buckeye"), offer mostly east to west (one-way) shipments with bi-directional service provided only between Pittsburgh and Altoona. Importantly, the existing 110-miles of bi-directional service has resulted in inconsistent service, including unreasonable delays and logistical challenges for shippers on a consistent basis. As such, the proposed extension of bi-directional service by another 147 miles (133 percent of the current bi-directional operations) will create negative outcomes for Pennsylvanian shippers, refiners and consumers across the Commonwealth. It is critical for PUC to rigorously examine the alleged benefits and actual feasibility of Laurel-Buckeye's new proposal to convert almost the entire pipeline into bi-directional operations.

Honorable Stephen DeFrank

March 18, 2026

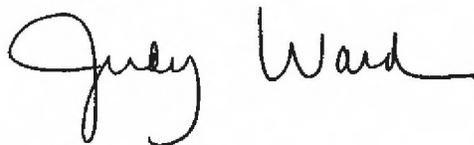
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Contrary to a measured approach, the ALJ's decision recommends granting the extension prematurely and unconditionally. Changing the historic operations of such an important public utility asset should require a thorough review by PUC to ensure the proposed operational changes do not exacerbate the operational concerns we heard from affected shippers, including:

- A much longer and complicated bi-directional service with new, unproven systems will lead to deterioration of service over the entire pipeline.
- Fuel transit times will be radically variable leading to missed, delayed or reduced shipments, negatively impacting price for consumers.
- Heating oil, a fuel produced almost exclusively by eastern refineries and widely used in homes across Pennsylvania, will not be readily available if the direction of flow on the pipeline can be dictated solely by out-of-state markets rather than local needs.
- Thousands of Pennsylvania jobs within and outside of the petroleum industry will be at risk if shippers, refiners and retailers who rely on the pipeline are forced to reduce their operations or shut down for lack of adequate service on the pipeline.

In conclusion, the PUC must subject Laurel-Buckeye to a comprehensive application review process that benefits the public. The PUC must reject the ALJ decision or approve a plan agreed upon by both sides. If the ALJ's decision is upheld, the Laurel-Buckeye will be detrimental to west-bound fuel to Pennsylvania residents, contrary to the pipeline's precedent since the 1950s.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Judy Ward
30th Senatorial District

cc: Honorable Pat Stefano, Senate of Pennsylvania
Vice-Chairman, Kimberly M. Barrow, PUC
Commissioner Kathryn L. Zerfuss, PUC
Commissioner John F. Coleman, Jr., PUC
Commissioner Ralph V. Yanora, PUC
Secretary Mathew L. Homsher, PUC