

# Upper Makefield *Township*

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## **Via Electronic Mail**

**July 29, 2025**

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**Re: Sunoco Pipeline LP (“SPLP”) Twin Oaks – Newark 14” Diameter Pipeline Release  
Upper Makefield Township, Bucks County Pennsylvania  
Comments on Site Characterization Work Plan.**

The Upper Makefield Township Board of Supervisors (“UMT BOS”), provides the following comments on the June 27, 2025, Revised Site Characterization Work Plan (“Work Plan”), prepared by Verdantas LLC (“Verdantas”), for the Sunoco Pipeline, LP (“SPLP”) Twin Oaks – Newark 14”-diameter pipeline release response.

These comments also consider the July 9, 2025 correspondence from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) to Energy Transfer, in which DEP responds to the lack of progress on vapor intrusion investigations at homes and the installation of monitoring wells in the area of known groundwater contamination, and provides notice to Energy Transfer that the work must be completed before the Interim Site Characterization Report is submitted on or before September 2, 2025.

Acknowledging the iterative nature of the site characterization and interim remediation processes, the UMT BOS reserves the right to provide additional comments, as data from site characterization and interim redial activities becomes available, including the Failure History Evaluation and other deliverables required by the May 2, 2025 Administrative Order, issued by the United States Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (“PHMSA”), relative to the release, operation and maintenance of the pipeline and the integrity of the pipeline.

So as not to be perceived as presenting impediments to SPLP to complete site characterization in the most expeditious manner, the UMT BOS requests that DEP approve the June 27, 2025, Revised Work Plan and requests that the content of the comments provided herein be addressed in the

Interim Site Characterization Report. Specifically, the UMT BOS objects to any requested extension of time to submit reports required under DEP's July 9, 2025, correspondence.

#### Release Mechanism

On March 6, 2025, DEP issued an Order, documenting complaints of petroleum odors in residential well water in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood dating back to as early as September 26, 2023 and PHMSA advises that the pipeline was leaking for at least 16 months before the leak was confirmed on January 31, 2025.

The Work Plan states that based on the observed leak rate, SPLP estimates the volume of the released petroleum product to be 156 barrels (6,552 gallons).

In the six months since the leak was confirmed, the UMT BOS, the community and elected officials have repeatedly requested that Energy Transfer provide calculations, monitoring records, and any other data supporting SPLP's estimate of the release. To date, that information has not been provided.

The magnitude and duration of the release are fundamental elements of determining the extent of contamination, evaluating potential pathways of contaminant migration and for formulating meaningful site characterization and remediation strategies.

The UMT BOS requests that all calculations, monitoring records and other data supporting SPLP's estimate of the release be included in the Interim Site Characterization Report.

#### Documentation of Results of Interim Remedial Actions

Energy Transfer advises that product recovery through July 23, 2025, totals 937 gallons or approximately 14 percent of the total estimated release, with 644 gallons of this product being entrained in soil excavated near the release location and 293 gallons recovered from wells.

The recovery efforts in wells have been limited to skimming and bailing systems and the use of absorbent pads. While not discussed in the Work Plan, the UMT BOS understands that SPLP is now considering a Total Fluid Recovery system to enhance product recovery.

The UMT BOS requests that the Interim Site Characterization Report include a discussion of all interim remedial actions, including product recovery amounts from all environmental media and detailed design drawings and specifications for the Total Fluid Recovery system, including any components of the system that may need to be located on Township property or within roadways.

#### Soil Impacts

The Work Plan presents three propositions to support SPLP's contention that widespread soil impacts are not present along the pipeline.

The UMT BOS requests that the results of recently completed In-Line Inspection ("ILI") data, and other elements of the Failure History Evaluation, be included in the Interim Site Characterization Report to evaluate SPLP's contentions within the context of the CSM.

#### Bedrock Geology

The project area is underlain by the Lockatong Formation of Triassic age. The Lockatong Formation has been the subject of extensive geologic research and investigations by the United States Geological Survey ("USGS") and others, and this information is accessible in published scientific literature. As such, the one paragraph description of the Lockatong formation presented in the Work Plan is inadequate.

The Interim Site Characterization Report should include an expanded discussion of bedrock geology, including regional and local bedrock structure, based on a comprehensive scientific literature search, and the results of surface geophysical surveys, drilling logs, borehole geophysical logging, and packer testing performed on recovery and site characterization wells.

#### Hydraulic Influence of Domestic Well Pumping

The Mt. Eyre neighborhood is comprised of 180 dwellings. Domestic water supply is provided by on-lot wells. The Work Plan states that the reported well depths range from 100-700 feet below ground level.

The USGS estimates that each American uses an average of 82 gallons of water per day. Assuming each dwelling in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood is occupied by three people, the combined groundwater withdrawal from the domestic wells in the neighborhood is estimated to be 44,280 gallons per day.

While the Work Plan acknowledges that the pumping of domestic wells creates "dynamic hydraulic gradients" in the water-bearing bedrock fractures which are the predominant pathways for groundwater movement, the target depths of recovery wells and site characterization wells have been limited to 75 feet below ground surface, despite evidence that contamination has migrated deeper.

Basic information about neighborhood domestic wells such as total depth, casing depth, pump settings and the distribution of water producing zones is limited, despite being easily attainable by removing the submersible pumps in the wells and performing a downhole television survey and a rudimentary suite of borehole geophysical logs, and more sophisticated borehole geophysical logs and straddle packer testing are readily available for evaluation of residential wells that have confirmed LNAPL impacts.

In this fractured bedrock setting, installation of continuously recording water level monitoring devices in wells that have confirmed impact is indicated to determine water level fluctuations in response to daily domestic water use. This technology is also appropriate for installation in site characterization wells to evaluate the areal, vertical, and directional hydraulic influence of domestic well pumping in the neighborhood.

The Interim Site Characterization Report should discuss how the hydraulic effects from pumping neighborhood supply wells will be considered in the remedial strategy.

### Proposed Site Characterization Tasks

The Work Plan advises that the site characterization is an iterative process with the results of each characterization activity being used to determine future activities, with changes to planned activities and the performance of additional activities expected, with changes being communicated to DEP in 90-day updates or other communication.

The proposed 90-day schedule for updates as presented in the Work Plan is impracticable.

Given that the site characterization will be performed in a high consequence residential neighborhood, notifications of changes to any planned activities should be made within 24 hours of SPLP's decision, to the Township Manager, by electronic mail, and allowing for 48 hours for the Township to respond to SPLP with questions or concerns and to provide notification to stakeholders, prior to the changes being implemented by SPLP.

### Standard Operating Procedures

As is standard industry practice, standard operating procedures should be included in the Work Plan and provided in the appendices of the Interim Site Characterization Report.

### Compile Available Property Information

As discussed in a previous comment, because of the presence of contamination in deep domestic water supply wells, and the influence of domestic well pumping, the CSM should not be limited to the evaluation of shallow groundwater flow.

### Soil Characterization

Preliminary interpretations and conclusions relative to the horizontal and vertical extent of petroleum impacts in the release area or along the pipeline are inappropriate for inclusion in this Work Plan and premature, pending the results of the recently completed In-Line Inspection ("ILI") data, Failure History Evaluation, and other elements of the PHMSA order.

Subjective phrases such as "relatively low concentrations" are also inappropriate for inclusion in this Work Plan. In the alternative, analyte concentrations should be compared to the relevant standard for the sampled media.

### Groundwater Characterization

The Work Plan states that the planned location of monitoring wells is based on the location of LNAPL and dissolved -phase concentrations greater than SHS MSCs and the distribution of fracture traces identified by ERI surveys.

The results of hydrogeologic investigations performed by the USGS and others suggest that the northeast orientation of bedrock strike within the Lockatong Formation should also be considered in the placement of monitoring wells.

### Monitoring Well Installation

As discussed in a previous comment, the presence of contamination in deep domestic wells in the neighborhood indicates the need for site characterization wells deeper than 75 feet.

The Township is on record with both SPLP and DEP as not concurring with the practice of using periodic manual water level measurements in domestic supply wells to monitor for hydraulic impacts associated with well drilling. Continuous water level monitoring devices appropriate for this application are commonly used by groundwater professionals worldwide and are readily available for purchase or rental.

#### Evaluation of Potential Vapor Evaluation Pathways

The UMT BOS agrees with DEP regarding the importance of conducting vapor intrusion investigations at residences in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood and requests that DEP enforce the deadlines for the performance of these investigations as presented in DEP's the July 9, 2025, correspondence with Energy Transfer.

#### Interim Characterization Report

The UMT BOS requests that an electronic copy of the Interim Site Characterization Report, inclusive of all figures, tables, exhibits, maps, and calculations be provided to the Township Manager on or before September 2, 2025.

Sincerely,



Terry Fedorchak  
Interim Township Manager  
Upper Makefield Township