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PRESS RELEASE

Sinkholes and Hired Muscle on the Mariner East Pipelines

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced that there had been new developments along Sunoco's Mariner East pipelines in Chester County, Pennsylvania over the weekend. On Sunday, January 20, a new sinkhole opened up in a neighborhood along the pipelines. In addition, the District Attorney's Office discovered that constables from outside of Chester County apparently had been hired by Sunoco to act as a private security force around the pipelines, holding themselves out as acting in an official capacity to people approaching the area of the pipelines.

District Attorney Tom Hogan stated, "At this point, the criminal investigation is widening and deepening, much like the damage being caused by these pipelines. We are investigating what individuals bear legal responsibility for these sinkholes. In addition, we want to know who hired these constables and authorized them to act like they have some type of legal authority in Chester County. This has the appearance of hired muscle showing up to intimidate our citizens."

On Sunday, January 20, another sinkhole opened along the Mariner East pipelines in the Lisa Drive neighborhood in Chester County. See attached photographs. The sinkhole exposed the Mariner East 1 pipeline, which had volatile natural gas liquids pumping through it when it was exposed.¹ This same neighborhood previously has suffered through multiple sinkholes caused by drilling related to Sunoco's pipelines. The prior sinkholes damaged the homeowners' properties, caused an evacuation of the area, and resulted in work on the pipelines being halted.

During interviews in the last few weeks, Chester County citizens reported that state constables were patrolling the pipelines in Chester County during the prior sinkhole incidents. The District Attorney's Office discounted this report because no Chester County constables had been authorized to do any such work.

¹ Coincidentally, a natural gas pipeline in Ohio exploded over the weekend, on January 21. A pipeline run by Sunoco exploded in Beaver County, PA in September of 2018.

However, when the January 20 sinkhole appeared, citizens reported the sinkhole to the District Attorney's Office. District Attorney Hogan dispatched Chester County Detectives to the scene at Lisa Drive. When a Chester County Detective in plain clothes approached the scene, an armed man flashed a badge at the Detective and identified himself as a constable. The Detective, who is familiar with all of the Chester County constables, asked the armed man who he worked for. The man then finally identified himself as a constable from Northumberland County in central Pennsylvania. When pressed further by the Detective, the man admitted that he had been hired as security by Sunoco.

The Chester County Detectives subsequently informed the man that he was not permitted to claim any official authority in Chester County or use his badge for such a purpose. District Attorney Hogan will be contacting the District Attorney of Northumberland County to discuss this situation.

“Sinkholes. Fouled well water. Obscene messages from out-of-state pipeline workers to Chester County residents. Hired guns flashing badges. Volatile natural gas liquids flowing in pipelines just a few feet from schools and homes. We are not sure what it will take to get the attention of Governor Wolf and the Public Utility Commission. All of this is happening on their watch. The Chester County District Attorney's Office is committed to this criminal investigation, even if we must fight alone. The citizens of Chester County deserve our protection.”

Anybody with further information about pipeline-related incidents should contact Chester County Detective Ben Martin at (610) 344-6866. Reports may be made confidentially. The Chester County prosecutors assigned to this matter are Alexander Gosfield, Myles Matteson, and special prosecutor Seth Weber.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan



