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## **Adorers to Appeal Judge's Decision in Pipeline Case**

The Adorers are disappointed that the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania determined on Sept. 28 that it did not have jurisdiction to hear the claims they filed against Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line (Transco) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The Adorers' claims arise out of Transco's decision to condemn the Sisters' property in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to construct its Atlantic Sunrise pipeline to transport fossil fuels being extracted through fracking.

At issue in this case is the Adorers' deeply held religious belief that the Earth is God's creation. The Sisters believe that God calls humans to treasure land as a gift of beauty and sustenance that should not be used in an excessive or harmful way.

As a matter of deeply held religious convictions and beliefs, the Adorers cannot use their land, or allow others to use their land, to participate in or facilitate activities that would harm the Earth and its life. The Earth and its inhabitants, particularly the poor, are under serious threat due to climate change caused by the trapping of greenhouse gases from the use of fossil fuels.

The development of large-scale fracking operations and construction of new pipelines as proposed by Transco will only accelerate the damage to the Earth and cause great harm to all of

God's creation. The poor and most vulnerable will experience the greatest harm.

As a matter of religious conviction and faith, the Adorers have steadfastly refused to allow Transco to use their property for its pipeline.

With full knowledge of the Adorers' religious convictions and objections, Transco nevertheless proceeded to use the power of the federal government to condemn an easement on the Adorers' property. This action will force the Adorers to allow Transco, a private, for-profit company, to use the Adorers' own land to facilitate and support the construction and perpetual operation of its 42-inch fossil fuel pipeline.

The Adorers maintain that Transco's actions constitute a substantial burden on the exercise of their religious beliefs and that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act guarantees them the right to assert a claim in court.

The United States Supreme Court has held that Congress intended the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to supersede all other federal legislation. The Adorers believe that includes the provisions of the Natural Gas Act at issue in this case.

While the Adorers respect the District Court's conclusion that they could only raise their religious freedom claims during FERC's administrative proceedings, the issues and rights involved in this case are so important that the Adorers believe additional judicial review is warranted.

Therefore, the Adorers plan to promptly appeal the decision to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia.