

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Anna Farneski; afarnesk@ramapo.edu / (201) 684.6844

April 30, 2013

**Ramapo College to Host Conference Examining Impact of Gas Pipelines  
Thursday, May 2**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Ramapo College’s Masters in Sustainability Studies and Environmental Studies Programs is partnering with the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, the Ramapough Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Catskill Mountainkeeper to present a conference “Distributing Gas, Limiting Impact: Responding to the Proliferation of Pipeline Projects” on Thursday, May 2 in the Alumni Lounge on campus.

The conference is free and open to the public.

Participants will focus on the distribution of gas through an expanding network of pipelines connecting gas extraction regions to markets: coastal cities, new gas fired power plants and potential export terminals. The enlargement of pipelines and the addition of bigger and new metering and compressor stations have impacted numerous property owners, neighborhoods and communities in New Jersey and adjacent New York.

The conference will examine the big picture impacts of what is occurring, ranging from direct and indirect project impacts, questions of community participation, issues of monitoring and remediation and the steps needed to mitigate and address these consequences at the project, community, state and federal levels.

The schedule is:

**8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Registration and Networking**

**9:00 to 9:15 a.m. Introduction by Professor Michael R. Edelstein Professor in the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Programs and Director, Institute for Environmental Studies, Ramapo College of NJ**

**9:15 to 10:45 a.m. Panel 1: Cumulative Impacts: A Highland's Snapshot *Chair: Erica Van Auken, New Jersey Highlands Coalition***

Ramapo College's Environmental Studies senior capstone Environmental Assessment class, organized as Ramapo Environmental Research Collaborative (RERC), has undertaken an environmental impact assessment of cumulative pipeline impacts in the Highlands region of New Jersey. Rather than addressing gas pipelines or line segments

in isolation, this is a novel attempt to capture a comprehensive understanding of region-wide impacts. In this session, study findings are reported.

**10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Panel 2: The Local Community: Impacts and Efforts**

*Chair:* Judith Sullivan, Esq. Ramapough Conservancy

Local activists have mobilized to address the intrusion of pipelines, compressor stations and similar infrastructure projects. Their experience represents an important test of citizen and community efficacy in the permitting process and confidence in the identification, mitigation and monitoring of impacts. This panel will explore the disconnect between the impacts identified in the FERC permitting process and those actually experienced in local communities. What is needed to improve the FERC Process and address local impacts of pipeline projects?

Panelists include:

Chief Vincent Mann, *Ramapough Lenape Nation*: Disproportionate Impacts for Native People

Clare Donohue, *Sane Energy*: Urban perspective on pipeline infrastructure

Alex Lotorto, *Energy Justice Network*: Civil Disobedience and Opposition as a Response

Pramilla Malick, Stop MCS, *Protect Orange County*

Alison Shelofsky, *Fight the Pipe*:

**12:15 to 1:15 p.m. Break Out Lunch**

Conference participants will be directed to the Birch Tree Inn where they can purchase tickets for a buffet lunch (at \$7.50 per ticket) or take the option to buy lunch from the Roadrunner cafe next door or to bring lunch. Networking opportunity. Possible break out clusters will be identified as an outcome of the morning's work.

**1:15 to 2:45 p.m. Panel 3: Action at the State Level to Address Gas Distribution Impacts** *Chair:* Julia Somers, Executive Director, New Jersey Highlands Coalition

This panel will explore what state level changes can be made to improve permitting decisions and to better regulate gas distribution projects by improving state review and oversight and by addressing the issues of need, climate impact and alternatives, principally green energy options.

Panelists include:

Susan Kraham, *Columbia University Law Clinic*: State Environmental Quality Review Act

Jeff Tittel, *NJ Sierra Club*: The 2011 NJ Energy Master Plan and Energy Infrastructure

Carl Richko, *Highlands Council Member and Former Mayor of West Milford*: Interstate Gas Projects from the State and Municipal Perspectives

Invited: Scott Brubaker, *NJDEP*:

**2:45-4:15 p.m Panel 4: Action at the Federal Level to Address Gas Distribution Impacts** *Chair*: Kate Millsaps, NJ Sierra Club

This panel will explore what changes can be made at the federal level to improve permitting decisions and better regulate gas distribution projects by improving review and oversight procedures.

Panelists include:

BJ Schulte, esq, *Jersey City Environmental Commission*: Reforming FERC; Cumulative Impact Assessments & Ending Permit Segmentation

Maya van Rossum, *Delaware Riverkeeper Network*: Regional Permitting Agencies

Lynda Farrell, Pipeline Safety Coalition

Invited: Carolyn Elefante

Invited: David Hanobic, FERC

Invited: Harriet Sugarman, ClimateMomma, linking to Climate 350.org's "Fossil Freedom Day of Action"

Invited: Allen Fore, Kinder Morgan

**4:15 to 5 p.m. Summation and Closing Roundtable:**

Chair: Ashwani Vasisht, Professor of Environmental Studies and Director of the Masters Program in Sustainability Studies, Ramapo College of NJ  
Michael R. Edelstein, Ph.D, Kate Millsaps, Erica Van Auken, Judith Sullivan, Esq.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP at <http://pipelineconference.eventbrite.com>

Off-campus visitors are advised to stop at the North Entrance Security Booth for a parking pass, which can be requested in advance.

Partner organizations include Energy Justice Network, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, Food and Water Watch, Pascack Sustainability Group, Transition Newton, North Jersey Pipeline Walkers, Franciscan Response to Fracking, ClimateMama, North Jersey Public Policy Network and Orange Environment, Inc.

###

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.