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## **PROXIMITY OF COMPRESSOR STATION DEVALUES HOMES BY AS MUCH AS 50%**

Fremont Center, NY - Homeowners living near the Millennium Pipeline Company's 15,000 horsepower compressor station on Hungry Hill Road in Hancock, New York have seen the value of their homes decline by as much as 50 percent since the industrial facility was constructed in the midst of what used to be a quiet, rural community.

In May 2014 several Hungry Hill residents sought real estate tax relief citing the adverse impact of the compressor station on their property values. The Town of Hancock, denied the tax grievances, but Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy subsequently offered to fund homeowner appeals. On August 25, 2014, small claims hearings were held in the Hancock Town Hall. Two homeowners, a certified Real Estate Appraiser, and a representative of Catskill Citizens testified that the compressor station was responsible for heavy truck traffic, noxious odors, persistent low-level vibrations, and air contamination. The witnesses also asserted that the facility presented a safety threat and recounted how a Millennium employee suddenly knocked on the door of a house late one evening and urged the family to quickly evacuate their home. Finally, it was alleged that blasting during the construction of the compressor station had cracked the foundation of one house, which in turn led to an unsafe spike of radon levels. (Pre and post-construction radon tests conducted by Professional Home Inspection Service of Binghamton, New York showed that radon levels in the home jumped from 3 pCi/L to 6.1 pCi/L, which is above the EPA recommended action guideline of 4.0 pCiL.)

In light of the evidence proffered, the Town of Hancock tax assessors agreed to decrease the assessed valuation and real estate taxes on two homes by 25 percent. The assessed valuation and taxes on a third home, the one that had been physically damaged, were cut by 50 percent. Hearing Officer John Creech, who presided over the settlement, was familiar with the compressor station and remarked, "I wouldn't want to live next to it." After the tax assessors agreed to the 50 percent tax cut he told the owners, "You have a good lawsuit here."

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