



Deutsche Umwelthilfe takes legal action against Nord Stream 2

Complaint filed for review of operating permit - Operation of natural gas pipeline would counteract climate goals - DUH demands investigation of previously unknown methane leaks - New scientific findings prove massively worse climate balance of natural gas due to methane leaks.

Berlin, 5.8.2020: Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) is filing a complaint with the Greifswald Higher Administrative Court (OVG) for review of the operating permit for the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, calling on the Stralsund Mining Authority to take account of new scientific findings on uncontrolled methane emissions and to investigate leaks in the extraction, transport and processing of natural gas. Methane is the main component of natural gas and up to 86 times more harmful to the climate than CO₂. According to new scientific findings, methane emissions from natural gas production are significantly higher than previously assumed. In the USA, this has already led to a 60 percent increase in methane emissions from the oil and gas industry in national inventories. The Stralsund Mining Authority previously rejected an application by DUH to review the permit for Nord Stream 2 on this basis, so DUH is now turning to the Greifswald OVG. DUH is demanding that the construction of Nord Stream 2 is suspended until the procedure is completed.

Constantin Zerger, Head of Energy and Climate Protection at DUH, said: *"The construction and operation of Nord Stream 2 is a bet against climate targets. Despite the ongoing climate crisis, the pipeline will cement the import of climate-damaging natural gas to Germany for decades. We are certain that Nord Stream 2 would not have been approved with the scientific evidence now available. The new measurement methods for methane leaks must now be taken into account, as they demonstrate a massive impact of the pipeline on our climate. The gas pipeline is therefore even more damaging to the climate than previously assumed: In the long term, it counteracts our climate goals and, in addition, methane leaks during extraction, processing and transport are severely heating up the climate crisis."*

The environmental impact assessment already carried out by the Stralsund Mining Authority on 31 January 2018 only refers to possible methane leaks from the Nord Stream 2 pipeline itself and assesses them as non-existent on the seaside. However, this assessment is incomplete, as it does not include methane leaks from extraction, transport and processing of natural gas. However, these emissions are inextricably linked to the operation of Nord Stream 2 - without the operation of the new pipeline, additional production of fossil gas would not be possible. New scientific findings were also gained on the emissions and measurement methods for methane leaks after the approval was granted by the Stralsund Mining Authority. These could not be taken into account in the original procedure, but now need to be reviewed.

Dr. Cornelia Ziehm, lawyer, who drafted the statement of claim said: *"When assessing the environmental impact of Nord Stream 2, it is important not to consider individual sections of the pipeline. Rather, each individual section forms a functionally necessary union with the extraction, transport and processing of the fossil natural gas. If that were not the case, Nord Stream 2 would*

simply not be operational. For this reason, at least a rough estimate of the environmental impact and methane leakage from production, transport and processing of the natural gas must be taken into account during the approval process. Furthermore, the operation of Nord Stream 2 would hardly be compatible with the precautionary principle, if, on the basis of current scientific knowledge, it cannot be ruled out that the operation of Nord Stream 2 will result in the release of significant amounts of climate-relevant methane emissions over several decades, thus undermining the efforts of the Paris Agreement.”

According to the precautionary principle enshrined in European law, if knowledge of the extent of environmental damage is incomplete, preventive action must be taken to avoid it. This is precisely the case with Nord Stream 2: its operation will lock in greenhouse gas emissions from the use of fossil natural gas for decades. In addition, extremely climate-damaging methane leaks cannot be quantified or ruled out; on the contrary, high methane leaks are very likely according to the current state of science. In its lawsuit, DUH therefore requests that this question is referred to the European Court of Justice.

Links:

To the complaint: <http://l.duh.de/p200805>

More information on Nord Stream 2: <https://www.duh.de/projekte/keine-neuen-leitungen-fuer-fossiles-gas/>

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