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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Brianne K. Nadeau, [202-265-3000](tel:202-265-3000), [brianne@rabinowitz.com](mailto:brianne@rabinowitz.com)

**Federal Officials Approve Further Industrialization of Seneca Lake  
*Opponents press Governor Cuomo's DEC to protect Finger Lakes***

**Reading, NY** –Yesterday, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved an application to expand natural gas storage in abandoned salt caverns along Seneca Lake, in the Finger Lakes region of Western New York.

The decision comes in spite of concerns about the safety and economic impacts of two projects proposed by subsidiaries of Houston-based Crestwood Midstream Partners – one expanding natural gas storage to 2 billion cubic feet and another creating a massive liquid petroleum gas (LPG) storage facility – both directly on the shores of the Lake. Crestwood has told shareholders that it intends to turn the scenic wine-making region into a gas storage infrastructure hub for the Northeastern United States.

“We are outraged by FERC’s decision,” said Yvonne Taylor of Gas Free Seneca. “Our expert cited a published study of massive roof failure in one of the proposed gas storage caverns, and the company still claimed no knowledge of the collapse. FERC may not care about that either ignorant or dishonest denial, but we do -- our safety and property values hang in the balance.”

FERC has no role in authorizing the proposed LPG storage facility, which must be approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). A coalition of local residents and business owners, concerned about the risks and impacts associated with the industrialization of the region are calling on DEC to reject the permit application.

“We have to draw the line here and now,” said Joseph Campbell of Gas Free Seneca. “Our community is at a tipping point, and our fate is in the hands of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s DEC. Allowing Crestwood to proceed with either the natural gas project or the LPG facility will jeopardize the sustainable economy we’ve worked so hard to build. We sincerely hope that the Governor and the DEC will realize what’s at stake and act to protect Seneca Lake.”

Seneca Lake provides drinking water to 100,000 residents and is central to the region’s thriving wine and tourism industry. Opening the site for LPG storage also would encourage hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale formation underlying the region.

Since forming in early 2011, Gas Free Seneca has built an organization of more than 200 business coalition members opposed to this facility. The group is receiving pro-bono legal services from the nonprofit environmental law organization Earthjustice.

“FERC’s decision today is a wake-up call to New Yorkers who want to protect the Finger Lakes region from unchecked industrialization,” said Earthjustice Managing Attorney Deborah Goldberg. “We will be watching DEC very carefully to ensure that it provides the rigorous environmental review of Crestwood’s proposed storage projects that FERC has denied us.”