



## Jersey City City Council will give OK to lobbyist to block pipeline

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The Jersey City City Council plans to vote to hire a lobbyist tomorrow in hopes of blocking a Texas company's plans to run a natural gas pipeline through Jersey City.

Spectra Energy has begun the federal application process to run a natural gas pipeline from an existing line in Linden through Staten Island, Bayonne and Jersey City to Manhattan as part of its New Jersey-New York expansion.

The resolution to hire Boston-based O'Neill and Associates for \$32,500 is on tomorrow's agenda.

"The next six months are critical because between now and the end of December, they're going to determine what the final route is," Deputy Mayor Rosemary McFadden told council members at yesterday's caucus.

While City Council members have been pinching pennies in the wake of a multi-million budget deficit, Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy defended the expenditure saying the consultants are needed to help navigate the application before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"This is an important issue and consists of a federal process which no one in our city is extremely knowledgeable of," Healy said in a statement. "This is a group with vast expertise and experience in this particular area. It is of utmost importance that we be guided through this process by a firm with this type of knowledge and credentials."

City Council members seemed to agree.

"I think it's imperative that we're represented," Ward A Councilman Michael Sottolano said.

Healy, state Sen. Sandra Cunningham, of Jersey City, and U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg have come out against the pipeline.

Under the contract, O'Neill would provide the city with a "federal relations campaign addressing key federal offices." The consultant would also develop questions and concerns related to the pipeline, which would be presented to the federal agencies.

The firm will provide weekly updates to the city and written reports twice a month.

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