

Russians are demanding to prevent the Nord Stream-2 Pipeline from cutting through the Kurgalsky reserve

Greenpeace Russia has launched a petition against the construction of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline through the Kurgalsky reserve. This is a unique natural area, unrivaled by any other areas in the whole North-West of Russia.

The construction of the gas pipeline means the destruction of all living things in a strip of land 85 meters wide and about 3.7 kilometres long. Here, the trees will be felled and the soil removed, all in order to lay two pipes and to build a road; the pipeline will pass through an old-growth forest and a unique relict dune. Scientists have found a large number of rare and endangered species of animals and plants listed in the Red Books of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Russia and the Leningrad Region on the proposed route of the gas pipeline.

PROTECT THE RESERVE

A nest of a white-tailed eagle - a rare bird of prey for the North-West of Russia - was discovered last year very close to the strip allocated for the construction. The nest is located only fifty meters away from the center of the route marked by pegs and benchmarks. That means that even if the nest will not be physically destroyed, these sensitive birds will abandon it.

The construction of the gas pipeline can also affect the key habitats of rare marine mammals: the gray seal and the Baltic Ringed seal.

Nord Stream-2 will irreversibly destroy the habitat of rare animals and plants, which is directly prohibited by Russian laws "On Environmental Protection" and "On Wildlife." In addition, this is contrary to the requirements of the Ramsar Convention. The construction of the gas pipeline is also prohibited by the regime of protection of the Kurgalsky reserve. Hence, laying the pipeline will also violate the law "On Specially Protected Natural Territories".

This might explain the preparation of a new provision on the reserve, which is currently being developed by the authorities of the Leningrad region. Public hearings on changing the boundaries of the reserve held in March 2017 in Kingisepp resulted in a scandal.

Double standards of Nord Stream 2 AG

“The Narva Bay and the Kolganpa cape were chosen as alternative routes. Based on the results of environmental surveys and evaluation of both routes, the option of the Narva Bay was considered preferable,” states the published non-technical annotation of the gas pipeline project.

The company's arguments are very simple: the Narva Bay option which affects the Kurgalsky Reserve, is shorter, more convenient and, apparently, cheaper. This, in the opinion of Gazprom and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Nord Stream 2 AG, is a sufficient excuse for destroying a unique natural area. It is strange that these facts are fully ignored by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, which is responsible for the state policy in the field of environmental protection.

There is another extremely interesting fact that illustrates how double standards are applied in the implementation of the project. In Russia, the main method of constructing a 3,8 km long pipeline section is the usual digging of trenches. In Germany, on the other hand, the laying of the on-shore pipeline will require the construction of a two-pass microtunnel.

In Russia, the trench will cut through the unique reserve while in Germany the gas pipeline will be laid underground, without affecting the natural landscape. In other words, environmental requirements in Germany must be respected, while in Russia this is not necessary.

Such a difference between these two approaches can probably be explained by the fact that the German authorities have imposed harsh environmental conditions. Russia authorities, however, have not done so.

Greenpeace calls on all those who are not indifferent to the fate of unique protected areas to demand that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Nord Stream 2 AG reject the route of the gas pipeline running through the Kurgalsky reserve in its current borders.

Greenpeace supporters have already helped to save the national parks "Yugyd va", "Samarskaya Luka" and the "Utrish" reserve from destruction. Together we will be able to protect the unique corner of the Baltic nature in the year of specially protected natural areas, as announced by the President. Public hearings after which a final decision on the pipeline route will be made are scheduled for June 1. We still have time!

SIGN THE PETITION BY MAY 31 <https://act.greenpeace.org/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=1863&ea.campaign.id=69973&ea.tracking.id=GPR-OS>