

# The Miami Herald

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## MIA fuel pipeline proposed beneath Ludlam Road

By Theo Karantsalis  
The Miami Herald

A proposed pipeline underneath Miami Springs would serve as the sole source of jet fuel to Miami International Airport.

The Everglades Pipe Line Co. sent a letter, on Jan. 22, to the city seeking permits to “install, operate, maintain, repair and replace the proposed pipeline” along the bike path and an adjacent canal that runs through Miami Springs and Virginia Gardens.

“The pipeline will be constructed and maintained to safe industry standards to ensure environmental and public protection,” wrote Daniel Mangum, an official with Buckeye Development, which was founded in 1886 by the Standard Oil Company. Buckeye is the parent company of Everglades Pipe Line Co.

Ludlam Drive will be restored to its original or “better” condition, wrote Mangum, who did not return an email seeking comment about when the company planned to start construction, where the fuel would come from and why Ludlam Road was chosen as a proposed pipeline site.

“It doesn’t sound like a very good idea, proposing a jet fuel pipeline so close to a residential neighborhood,” said Virginia Gardens Mayor Spencer Deno, who hasn’t yet received any notice from Buckeye regarding the proposal.

One Miami Springs resident agreed.

“I think the pipeline would be better across the canal along the Florida East Coast Railway property because of the decreased risk to residents if it were there,” said Mel Johnson, a former city council candidate who has lived in Miami Springs for more than 50 years. “Several public workshops should be made available, and I would not be averse to the residents voting on this issue.”

Johnson thinks the safety of the pipeline could be an important issue in the city elections set to be held on April 2.

Last December, Buckeye shut down one of its 10-inch fuel pipelines in New Jersey after residents smelled gas vapors and a leak was detected. About 140,000 barrels of refined petroleum products per day were pumped through the pipeline.

The company reported to government authorities that 25 gallons of gas had spilled, according to Reuters. The report then shows that a vacuum truck later sucked up about 700 gallons of “oil product.”

As far as any potential hazards go for the Ludlam Road project, one environmental-law expert points out that the engineering requirements for a jet-fuel pipeline are stringent and closely monitored.

“The pipeline would be specifically engineered, and the quality and workmanship would be second to none,” said Michael Radell, a Miami-based environmental-law attorney. “There are many places in the county where potentially hazardous materials are being passed through pipelines.”

Miami Springs, formerly called Country Club Estates, was renamed in 1930 to celebrate the abundant supply of fresh water beneath its surface. The well fields near the high school help supply water to many communities north of Flagler Street.

Local city officials may not have much say in the matter, as the road is operated and maintained by the county, which falls under the jurisdiction of County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. Sosa’s office is looking into the proposal and asked for more time to gather facts before responding to a question from The Miami Herald regarding what the permitting process for such a pipeline would entail.

The same stretch of road has been the site of construction and inconvenience for residents over the past few years. In 2009, nearly 3,000 Australian pine trees were removed along Ludlam Road’s bike path that were forcing walkers to detour at times into the busy street. It is unclear whether the new trees planted there would be uprooted.

In 2011, residents had to make provisions while lights were installed along the path.

“I would be concerned about whether walkers and bikers can get where they need to during the work and the condition of the path once the job’s done,” said John Hopkins, a bicycle advocate who works with Miami-based Green Mobility Network.

“You don’t want an open ditch left there, lest someone stumble into it.”

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