



## No New or Expanded Fracked Gas Pipelines

### Clean and Efficient Energy, Not Handouts to the Gas Industry

The Massachusetts Attorney General's report of 2015 made it clear that we do not need more natural (i.e. 'fracked') gas in the Commonwealth, but that we could meet our energy needs through energy conservation, energy efficiency, innovations in energy demand-response pricing, and increasing use of renewable clean energy sources like solar and wind, which we have in abundance.

It is not surprising that the gas companies would like to increase their profits, while taking few risks, by charging consumers to build more pipelines. They realize that increased natural gas capacity will tie us to use that energy source for at least the next 30 years. Once built, we will have little incentive to develop the infrastructure to make use of local forms of clean, renewable energy. The MA legislature should vigorously oppose efforts to enable gas companies to expand or build new gas pipelines.

### Prohibit Charging Consumers for Pipelines

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled in 2016 that charging electric customers to build new gas pipelines violated the provisions of earlier electricity deregulation legislation. We urge lawmakers not to support any proposed legislation that would change existing law in order to allow such a 'tax' on electric ratepayers, and to support proposals that strengthen consumer protection.

Pertinent legislation includes:

**An Act clarifying authority and responsibilities of the department of public utilities (H3400/S1847)**

Sponsored by Rep. Kulik and Sen. Eldridge

**An Act protecting ratepayers from gas pipeline expansion costs (H2698/S1855)**

Sponsored by Rep. Gordon and Sen. Jehlen

Legislation filed by Rep. Kulik and Senator Eldridge would codify the SJC's ruling, ensure the public's ability to intervene at the DPU, protect ratepayers against self-dealing by energy conglomerates, reform pipeline siting to protect landowners and conservation areas, and hold local distribution gas contracts to high standards regarding the capacity they are allowed to buy. Legislation filed by Sen. Jehlen and Rep. Gordon would also codify the SJC's ruling and ensure that electric *and* gas consumers can never be forced to subsidize new interstate gas pipelines.

## Fix the Leaks!

When evaluating the need for gas in our region, policymakers should remember that over thousands of leaks have been documented in our statewide network of gas distribution pipelines. These leaks consist mostly of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and present a hazard to the environment and to utility workers.

Progress is being made on gas leaks, but the problem has not been completely solved. A 2014 law directed utilities to accelerate replacement of leak-prone pipe, and later legislation expands gas leak repair to address climate pollution. Provisions in a 2016 energy bill call for fixing environmentally significant methane leaks from natural gas pipelines when construction in the vicinity of the local gas pipeline is undertaken, though the definition of “leaks with a significant environmental impact” is still being defined through the regulatory process.

It is prudent to require the fixing of all such methane leaks before any new or enlarged natural gas pipelines be considered. In fact, a coalition of Republican state legislators wrote the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on this topic when the agency was considering the proposed Kinder Morgan Northeast Energy Direct pipeline. Furthermore, gas companies should also be prohibited from charging customers for leaked gas, as in Texas and Pennsylvania, and numerous other states.

Pertinent legislation includes:

**An Act relative to protecting consumers of gas and electricity from paying for leaked and unaccounted for gas (H.2683/S.1845)**

Sponsored by Rep. Barber and Sen. Eldridge

Ratepayers foot the bill annually for the lost and unaccounted for gas that seeps through the aging, leaky natural gas pipelines under our feet. Utility companies are responsible for repairing these gas leaks or replacing the pipes, but with the ability to pass the cost on to the consumer, they don't have the incentive to do so. This legislation will incentivize repair or replacement of gas pipes by prohibiting utilities from charging ratepayers for the cost of lost and unaccounted for gas. This legislation would encourage efficiency in every step of the process, benefitting consumers & environment.