

September 8, 2022

From: Ellie Goldberg, 79 Elmore Street, Newton, MA 02459

To: Members of the Public Facilities Committee

Re: Objection to Gas Pipeline Replacements

Gas is not safe, not clean, not green. As we remember the September 13, 2018 Merrimack Valley explosions and the vivid images of flames and destruction, we can easily visualize the danger of Newton's leaky gas infrastructure and its system-wide long-standing deficiencies. I am writing to share my heightened sense of urgency to reduce the risks of gas in our community.

As the review of the Gas System Enhancement Plan revealed, replacing pipelines does not make the system safer and diverts public funds from cost-saving, clean and efficient energy solutions.

We know better. Today, you wouldn't ignore the health hazards and liabilities of lead paint, asbestos, chlordane and UFFI insulation. Now, it makes no sense to ignore the health hazard of gas as it contaminates the air we breathe all along the pipelines from the drill pads to our kitchens. And, it makes no fiscal sense to deliberately increase the cost to ratepayers for decades to come. National Grid is already charging customers for the lost gas from hundreds of pipeline leaks.

This week we are witnessing the dramatic severity of extreme weather -- the heat, the droughts, and the flooding. We know our degrading pipeline system is increasingly vulnerable to failure because of the extremes of freezing and thawing (and water infiltration in the pipes). Let's rethink our assumptions about environmental stability and realize it is shortsighted to allow piecemeal pipeline replacements that allow methane to continue to drive that instability.

Rachel Carson was right: Prevention is the Imperative. I urge you to deny future grants of location and insist that National Grid adopt a coordinated comprehensive whole city **triage and transition** plan for public health and safety, emissions reduction and consumer protection.

**TRIAGE** means repair the largest, most hazardous and wasteful leaks. Use resources wisely to target the leakiest pipes, especially by fixing the high volume leaks and maintaining safety features such as ensuring accessible gas turn off valve caps.

**TRANSITION**: Accelerate a managed, just transition to safe clean energy. It is imperative to stop capital expenditures on more fossil fuel infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

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