

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
MASSACHUSETTS

In the City Council, June 4th, 2015

Upon the Recommendation of Council President William H. Dwight, Councilor Ryan R. O'Donnell, Council Vice-President Jesse M. Adams, and Councilor Alisa F. Klein

**Resolution Calling for Transparency and Public Representation
Regarding Natural Gas Infrastructure**

- WHEREAS, Columbia Gas of Massachusetts has imposed a moratorium on providing new natural gas service to residential and commercial customers in the City of Northampton, just as Berkshire Gas has in other communities throughout Hampshire and Franklin Counties; and
- WHEREAS, The moratorium in Northampton carries serious economic consequences for the City, and impedes important development including the two proposed affordable housing projects on Pleasant Street; and
- WHEREAS, Berkshire Gas has cited lack of capacity in the natural gas pipeline spur known as the Northampton Lateral as the reason for its moratorium, and indicated that only the construction of the Northeast Expansion of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline (now known as the Northeast Energy Direct project) can provide the extra capacity required to restore service; and
- WHEREAS, Residents of Western Massachusetts have rightly raised questions about the timing of the moratoria possibly being directly related to widespread public opposition to the Tennessee Gas Pipeline expansion; and
- WHEREAS, Clarity and transparency would benefit the impacted communities, both local and regional, by restoring public confidence and trust; and
- WHEREAS, In addition to those supporting the Northeast Energy Direct project, residents who oppose the project should be represented in proceedings conducted by the Department of Public Utilities as it reviews potential agreements between local natural gas utilities and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company; and
- WHEREAS, The Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation representing the interests of residents opposed to the overbuilding of gas pipeline capacity in the region;

WHEREAS, a 2013 research report released by the office of Senator Edward Markey documents that between 2000 and 2011, by not replacing leaking natural gas pipelines, gas companies have passed on to Massachusetts ratepayers between \$640 million and \$1.5 billion in costs for “unaccounted for” gas that never reached their homes, businesses, and municipalities, and that this leaked gas has contributed irreparably to the degradation of the public’s health; climate change; and between 2004 and 2012, caused over 250 explosions; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in 2011, leaks and other processes of the natural gas distribution system were the largest source of methane emissions in the U.S., accounting for 19 percent of total methane emissions, methane being a gas that possesses global warming potential far greater than other greenhouse gases, specifically: it has been measured to be over 80 times more powerful a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide over a 20 year period; and

WHEREAS, this unaccounted for gas, if captured through repair and upgrade of the current pipeline infrastructure, could likely meet a significant portion, if not all, of our energy needs and allow for new hook-ups; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts House Bill 2870/Senate Bill 1768, an Act relative to protecting consumers of gas and electricity from paying for leaked and unaccounted for gas, seeks to protect customers from paying for unaccounted for gas by prohibiting providers from including the cost of unaccounted for gas, as well as the costs of reducing or remedying loss, in the rate base;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Northampton, Massachusetts:

1. Calls on Columbia Gas and Berkshire Gas to embrace complete transparency and make public all engineering and financial information substantiating the claim that the Northampton Lateral is at capacity, and to explain why the need for the moratorium was not known farther in advance; and
2. Asks the companies to explore alternative solutions including upgrading existing infrastructure, as well as put forth their plans in the case that the Northeast Energy Direct project does not materialize; and
3. Affirms its support for the intervention of the Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast, Inc. in proceedings before the Massachusetts Department of Public

Utilities that relate to the Northeast Energy Direct project.

4. Asks the Department of Public Utilities to consider the project in the broader context of the Commonwealth's energy future, which should encourage conservation, greater energy efficiency and renewable sources.
5. Calls for Massachusetts gas companies to, rather than build new pipeline in the State, repair the current pipeline infrastructure to eliminate the leakage of natural gas and in so doing reduce the health, safety and environmental dangers associated with gas leaks; and
6. Goes on record as supporting MA H. 2870/S. 1768 to prohibit Massachusetts gas companies from passing on to consumers costs associated with leaked, unaccounted for gas.

The Council Clerk shall send copies of this resolution to U.S. Senators Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren, Congressman James McGovern, Governor Charlie Baker, Attorney General Maura Healey, State Senate President Stanley Rosenberg, and State Representatives Peter Kocot and Stephen Kulik.

In City Council, June 4, 2015
Passed First Reading, on Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No

Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council

In City Council, June 18, 2015
Passed Second Reading, on Roll Call Vote of 7 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Councilors Dwight & Carney)

Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council

Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled
I hereby certify that the above Resolution passed the Northampton City Council on June 18, 2015

David J. Narkewicz, Mayor approved the Resolution on June 19, 2015
Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council