

To Energy Facilities Siting Board:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Sustainability Committee in Ashland, Massachusetts regarding Eversource's proposed natural gas pipeline replacement project (case # EFSB 18-02). We would like to express our strong opposition to this project.

Our committee was formed several years ago to promote sustainable practices in Ashland. Since doing so, we have achieved Green Community status in the Commonwealth and worked at various levels of community and government to make our community healthier, more energy efficient, and in line with state environmental policy. In Ashland, we are supporting Massachusetts' goals by taking action to reduce the use of non-renewable fossil fuels that contribute to climate change. Natural gas unavoidably leaks methane into our atmosphere, both from the fracking process and from pipeline leaks. This negatively affects people, wildlife, and overall air quality. Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas that is thirty times as powerful as carbon dioxide and thus has a major impact on climate change. The recent events in Woburn and the Merrimack Valley demonstrate that there is no guarantee of safety. Natural gas is a fossil fuel based form of energy and not a renewable one. More importantly, it is not a sustainable source of long-term energy.

Eversource asserts that they are responding to capacity issues and consumer demand via this proposal. However, earlier this year Ashland switched from Eversource to Public Power for our electricity needs and adopted green aggregation, ensuring that 100% of our electricity comes from clean wind power. The town of Ashland does not want or need any new investment in fossil fuels, and we don't want to bear the monetary burden of construction for natural gas sent elsewhere. As a committee, we are worried that if approved, Ashland ratepayers will bear the cost of this project, both financially and in terms of the land and traffic difficulties. We are also deeply concerned about the effects on the environment and wildlife inevitably associated with large-scale construction projects.

On a statewide level, a 2016 study by Attorney General Maura Healey determined that "the region is unlikely to face electric reliability issues in the next 15 years and additional energy needs can be met more cheaply and cleanly through energy efficiency and demand response."

The full text of this document is accessible through this link:

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2015/2015-11-18-electric-reliability-study.html>

Eversource's website puts forth a commitment to renewable energy and an acknowledgment that consumer trends are moving away from fossil fuels. If Eversource believes that it is facing a capacity issue in the near future, they should be investing in more renewable sources of energy and demand reduction conservation activities for their customers. If Eversource is concerned about pipeline safety, they should be working on an actual 6" replacement, instead of a 12" expansion. At the recent public comment hearing, Eversource representatives asserted that there is currently no safety concern with the existing 6" pipe and that no repairs are currently needed. Therefore, we find the proposal project title ("Hopkinton-Ashland Transfer Line Replacement

Project”) to be deceptive and misleading. The size of the pipeline would double and the amount of gas flowing within it would quadruple. As no demonstrated need has been proven, we insist that this project is unnecessary and that the significant environmental and fiscal costs would outweigh the benefits.

In conclusion, the Ashland Sustainability Committee requests that you reject Eversource’s project proposal as it is out of sync with the state emissions goals, customer wishes, and the long-term environmental health of our community.

Sincerely,

Matthew Marshquist (co-chair)

Kyle Ahlers (co-chair)

Tricia Kendall

Wayne Bates

Rob Moolenbeek

Margy Gassel

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