

Energy & Technology Committee
Testimony for SB 1078, HB 6985

To Co-Chairs Representative Reed, Senator Doyle and members of the Energy & Technology Committee,

I am writing to oppose sections of SB 1078 and HB 6985, in particular with regard to new gas pipeline expansions. I oppose both state subsidies, electricity rate-payer and federally mandated congestion charge financing for new gas pipelines.

The Federal Power Act and the National Gas Act clearly delineate the electric and gas energy markets. Though Spectra Energy, Eversource, and some leaders within Connecticut government advocate for this “novel” approach, there is no legal precedent or law that would allow for electric ratepayers to pay for the costs of procuring contracts for pipeline expansion, or for allowing payment through the federally mandated congestion charge. This legislation would open Connecticut up to legal challenge that could last 5-8 years, causing further financial burden on Connecticut taxpayers.

Connecticut’s Global Warming Solutions Act sets reduction targets for 2020 and 2050 for emissions of greenhouse gases. Committing to large-scale infrastructure for burning of fossil fuels, including methane or natural gas, will not allow the state to meet these goals. Raw fugitive emissions of methane are inherent with this infrastructure, with accidental releases, pressure-induced releases, planned blow downs for maintenance, faulty valves, leaky pipes, all sources of escapes of fuel as it is transferred through the system to end-use customers.

Fugitive raw methane emissions, 87 times more potent at warming the atmosphere in the first 20 years of release, combined with carbon dioxide emissions from burning natural gas, will continue to aggravate climate change and extreme precipitation events in New England, destabilizing Connecticut’s economy with damage and maintenance required to respond to these events, and rebuilding/relocating other high-cost state infrastructure.

While SB 1078 has much needed features with regard to Class I renewable energy and distributed energy, portions of Sections 4 & 5 of SB 1078 and Section 1 of HB 6985 are ill-advised.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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