



SIERRA CLUB

*Connecticut Chapter
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Testimony of Martha Klein

H.B. 6329 An Act Concerning Hydraulic Fracturing Waste In Connecticut Raised Bill 7246 An Act Establishing Parity For Oil and Gas Leaks

Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Rep. Demicco and members of the committee,
On behalf of the Sierra Club and it's more than 8,000 members in Connecticut, thank you
for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 6329 and HB 7246.

HB 6329

As a result of Public Act 15-107, state ratepayers will pay for any future natural gas pipeline infrastructure expansion through a surcharge on ratepayers' electric bills. Similar charges have been blocked in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, but Connecticut's surcharge remains in place.

Gas pipeline expansion will make meeting the state's mandated greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals impossible. There are neither economic nor environmental benefits to be gained by forcing ratepayers to subsidize massive fracked gas pipelines. Instead, any public subsidies should be directed toward the growth of energy efficiencies and 100 % renewable power.

Please consider the following:

- There are no cost savings associated with ratepayer subsidized interstate gas pipelines because there are massive cost increases that will occur as a result of the overbuilding of gas capacity in New England which will burden ratepayers with the cost. (Find the Synapse Study [HERE](#)).
- Eversource and UI/Iberdrola, are the major electricity distributors in the state. Connecticut has among the highest costs for electricity in the nation. Building massive pipeline expansion will cost ratepayers approximately twice what the industry has claimed.
- Energy demand in New England has been flat for over a decade, primarily due to increased energy efficiencies, as well as to renewable power coming online. The gas pipelines that already exist are rarely filled to capacity now. As more efficiencies and renewable power continue to keep energy demand low for some time into the future, excess methane capacity will simply not be needed. Overbuilt capacity means that some infrastructure will be abandoned at ratepayer expense.

In 2015, The Connecticut legislature passed Public Act 15-107 to make all electricity ratepayers subsidize construction and operation of future interstate gas pipelines. No other New England states have passed laws or regulations requiring the public pay for privately owned infrastructure operated by for-profit corporations.

- Due to extensive methane emissions that occur primarily at fracking sites and along the transport infrastructure, leaked methane has a greater negative impact on the climate than does carbon dioxide.

HB 7246

A recent study, *Gas Leaks in Hartford*, found leaky natural gas pipelines are costing Connecticut consumers millions of dollars a year. The study found a gas pipeline leak rate of about 3.2 leaks per road mile in Hartford. The researchers reported that the "worst leaks in Hartford were noted all along the length of Main Street," and that leaks tended to be fixed more quickly in the business and downtown districts than in lower-income residential areas.

Gas leaks are not only costing ratepayers, but also add to air pollution to the atmosphere, a major factor in global warming. Methane is a major contributor to the greenhouse gases that most scientific research has linked to climate change. Natural gas is 97 percent methane, and pipelines and the "fracking" of wells that produce the gas are major contributors to air pollution.

United Illuminating and Eversource, who own all the local gas distribution companies in the state, get paid for leaking methane, making our electricity more expensive and our bills higher, while at the same time causing climate change from the emissions.

Specifically, for the reasons set forth above, we recommend both HB 6329 and HB 7246 be amended to prohibit surcharges from being levied on utility customers to subsidize interstate natural gas pipeline capacity.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully,

Martha Klein
Chair

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