



CITY OF LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF HEALTH

September 5, 2018

Governor Charles Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street Room 280
Boston, MA 02133
Attention: Governor's Office

Dear Governor Baker;

The Lowell Board of Health joins over 70 other Local Health Boards across the Commonwealth in urging you to require an independent health impact assessment prior to authorization of any natural gas infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth.

Natural gas flowing through pipelines contains volatile contaminants, such as benzene and formaldehyde, which can cause human illnesses, even at low concentrations. Releases are routine, whether from leaks or maintenance. The Commonwealth has an obligation to protect the health of its citizens; yet, the potential health effects of natural gas pipelines are not being examined to the extent that the Public's health and welfare is being protected to the best of the Commonwealth's capability.

The Lowell Board of Health believes more effective regulation of existing natural gas pipelines to minimize adverse health effects is required. This perspective is shared by national health organizations, including the American Medical Association:

"Our AMA recognizes the potential impact on human health associated with natural gas infrastructure and supports legislation that would require a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment regarding the risks that may be associated with natural gas pipelines."

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) has adopted the following policies:

1. That the MMS recognizes the potential impact on human health associated with natural gas infrastructure. (HP)
2. That the MMS advocate to appropriate agencies and the Massachusetts state legislature to require ongoing independent Comprehensive Health Impact Assessments to assess the human health risks of all existing and proposed new or expanded natural gas infrastructure in Massachusetts. (D)

This is an issue of great urgency as new pipelines that may impact the public health are being considered for Massachusetts. The Lowell Board of Health encourages your Administration to require health impact assessments of high pressure fracked gas infrastructure projects prior to any further expansion or new construction occurs. The Board also encourages your Administration to support the expansion of clean renewable energy programs that will lessen the health risk impacts for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

City of Lowell Board of Health