

October 29, 2024

Dear Governor Dan Mckee and Director Terrance Gray:

We, the undersigned elected and appointed officials, urge you to stop the expansion of fracked-gas infrastructure in Rhode Island. The transportation and burning of fracked-gas emits dangerous toxins that already impact the health and safety of Rhode Island residents, and burning fracked-gas is responsible for a huge portion of the State's greenhouse gas emissions. In the era of climate change, it is imperative that we rapidly shut down fossil fuel infrastructure, not expand it.

Enbridge, a Canadian fossil fuel corporation, has announced plans for a massive expansion to the "Algonquin" pipeline system that extends across the Northeast, and through Rhode Island. Details of the expansion, dubbed "Project Maple" are scarce, but it will likely include expanding the fracked-gas compressor station in Burrillville. For years local residents have raised concerns about the pollution and noise coming from the compressor station in Burrillville, which burns gas in order to create pressure along the pipeline route. The facility has also been the site of sustained protests and controversy. From 2014-2015 there were several protests against a previous expansion to the compressor station. Then in 2015 Invenergy proposed building a massive power plant immediately adjacent to the compressor station - the project was scrapped in 2017 after years of Statewide advocacy.

Enbridge has already commenced construction on another pipeline expansion - a project that should have all Rhode Islanders concerned. The company wants to double the size of its pipeline that stretches under the Sakonnet River from Little Compton to Portsmouth. This major expansion would involve using the Horizontal Directional Drilling process to bore under the Sakonnet River. According to Enbridge, work on the project would take seven months, with work happening six days a week for 12-24 hours a day. Enbridge says that there is not a need for additional gas capacity on Aquidneck Island, and that the expansion is only for maintenance - but they have failed to pursue other less destructive maintenance solutions that would not involve expanding the pipeline.

The expansion of fracked-gas infrastructure is also incompatible with Rhode Island's emission reduction goals. The 2021 Act on Climate, signed by Governor Mckee, calls on the State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2040, and to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Then in 2022, the General Assembly enacted a Renewable Energy Standard of 100% by 2033.

We urge you to protect Rhode Island communities, and the health and safety of all residents by publicly opposing Project Maple and the Sakonnet River Pipeline project, and directly your agencies to reject all permits for both projects.

Sincerely,

Representative David Morales
Representative Susan Donovan
Representative Lauren Carson
Representative Arthur Handy
Representative Brandon Potter
Representative David Bennett
Representative Cherie L. Cruz
Representative Teresa Tanzi
Representative Jennifer Stewart
Representative Jennifer Boylan
Representative Enrique George Sanchez
Senator Sam Bell
Senator Meghan Kallman
Senator Samuel Zurier