MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Limiting Methane Leaks from Gas Pipelines

SB 232- AAC The Allowable Percentage of Leakage from Gas Pipelines

BACKGROUND
Connecticut is served by thousands of miles of leaky gas pipes, which have not been adequately maintained by our state’s utility companies. These leaks contribute to fugitive greenhouse gas emissions and create a significant public safety hazard. A 2016 Sierra Club report revealed that methane gas leaks across the City of Hartford alone leak as much as 43,000 cubic feet per day (approximately 313 metric tons of methane per year).

Methane gas is a potent greenhouse gas, which contributes significantly to global warming. According to researchers at Princeton University, methane gas can be up to 30 times more effective at trapping heat in our atmosphere than CO2, while some analyses estimate that methane has 50-80 times the heat trapping potential of CO2. In this respect, fugitive methane is worse for the climate than burning fossil fuels like coal and oil. Finally, leaky gas mains create the potential for fatal explosions, such as the 2018 Columbia Gas line disaster in Massachusetts that impacted 40 homes.

JUSTIFICATION
Methane leaks are a public safety hazard, are counterproductive to Connecticut’s efforts to combat climate change, and should be limited to the greatest extent possible. Unfortunately, the current system employed by PURA for detecting and repairing gas leaks is purely reactionary, and not sufficient to identify dangerous leaks as they occur. Furthermore, the cost of escaped gas is born by consumers, leaving utilities with little to no incentive to make repairs as needed.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- PURA is required to audit utilities whenever the amount of lost or unaccounted for gas exceeds 1% of the total load in a given calendar year;

- Gas utilities are prohibited from recovering the cost of unaccounted-for gas through a charge on consumers’ gas bills.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS SB 232- LIMITING METHANE GAS LEAKS IN CONNECTICUT

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.

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