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Contacts: Lee Ziesche, lee@SaneEnergyProject.org, +1 (954) 415-6228  
Lindsay Meiman, lindsay@350.org, +1 (347) 460-9082  
Robert Wood, rjacksonwood@gmail.com, +1 (585) 261-2795  

Stop the Williams Pipeline Coalition Applauds AG Investigation into National Grid  
*The NYS AG joins the Public Service Commission in investigating the monopoly utility*

New York — The office of the New York State Attorney General announced on Friday that it has begun an investigation into National Grid’s decision to refuse gas service to prospective and existing customers in the New York City region, the Daily News reported. Attorney General Letitia James will be looking into whether National Grid violated state law by creating a moratorium, investigating both the utilities’ gas supply and the way it has communicated with its customers about that supply. The probe escalates New Yorkers’ unrelenting fight against toxic fracked gas pipelines like the unnecessary Williams Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline, which communities have asking Governor Cuomo to stop for over three years.

The Stop the Williams Pipeline Coalition issued this statement:

> We stand resolutely behind Attorney General Letitia James’ investigation into National Grid’s ongoing gas moratorium. For months, National Grid has been holding small businesses and ratepayers hostage, causing irreparable economic harm in a desperate attempt to secure future profits by getting an unnecessary pipeline approved. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that National Grid doesn’t need the gas, and that they have abused their monopoly privilege in trying to convince politicians that they do. We are confident that the Attorney General James will determine the same.

The AG’s investigation begins as the New York State Department of Public Service’s (DPS) Public Service Commission’s separate investigation into the utility continues. In August, Governor Cuomo asked the DPS to broaden that probe, asking the Department to “impose appropriate penalties and sanctions” where necessary and to “consider alternatives to National Grid as franchisee for some or all of the areas it currently serves.”

Evidence that there is no gas shortage in the New York region has only grown over the last few months. On Friday, Newsday reported that Long Island Power Authority—National Grid’s largest gas customer—cut its gas use by 65% over the last decade, confirming predictions by four separate entities—the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the New York Independent Systems Operator (NYISO), the New York State Energy Plan, and LIPA itself—that gas demand
would remain flat to negative. In 2017, PSC records show, National Grid itself used 35% less gas than expected, even as its customer base grew far beyond expectations.

In April, public testimony from National Grid revealed that National Grid had actually canceled contracts with three different, already installed natural gas pipelines coming from Canada, including one that provided a substantial portion of New York City’s peak day capacity. It was also revealed that National Grid had sold $284 million of the supposedly needed gas to third parties, keeping 15% as profit, and that they contracted for 100% of the Williams Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline’s gas only after no other buyers claimed it.

The AG and PSC investigations come as monopoly utilities all over the country, and in New York City in particular, are coming under increased scrutiny. Monopoly utilities have used ratepayer funds to lobby against renewable energy, and both National Grid and Con Edison in New York are currently asking to raise customer rates in order to fund millions of dollars of new fossil fuel infrastructure.

Much of that infrastructure risks becoming stranded assets. Pipelines such as the Williams NESE pipeline are expected to last 40-50 years. Yet the recently passed Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act mandates that New York State be carbon neutral by 2050. Were the pipeline to be decommissioned early, the costs would likely fall to ratepayers.

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**MEDIA AVAILABILITY:** Members of the Stop the Williams Pipeline Coalition, and author of *False Demand* report, available for interview upon request.

**The Stop the Williams Pipeline coalition** is organized by 350Brooklyn, 350.org, Food and Water Watch, New York Communities for Change, Rockaway Beach Civic Association, Sane Energy Project, and Surfrider NYC Chapter

For more, visit [www.StopTheWilliamsPipeline.org](http://www.StopTheWilliamsPipeline.org)