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Communities protest National Grid at Climate Week NYC while the company builds fracked gas North Brooklyn Pipeline  
Activists say National Grid is fueling climate crisis and poisoning BIPOC communities in Brooklyn while greenwashing and claiming to be climate leaders.

Brooklyn, NY - On September 20th, a group of community members from No North Brooklyn Pipeline and Frack Outta Brooklyn Coalitions swarmed the lobby of National Grid’s HQ in downtown Brooklyn, where they dropped banners and held a speak out with an Afro-Latin drum
line against the company's sponsorship of Climate Week NYC and the COP26 Glasgow climate conference.

President of National Grid, Badar Khan, and CEO, John Pettigrew, both spoke at the Opening Ceremony of Climate Week in NYC. Directly after, organizers began an online event explaining their opposition to the pipeline and their frustrations with National Grid’s sponsorship of the climate conferences, leading to a livestream of protest happening inside National Grid HQ.

Community members from across Brooklyn cite National Grid’s North Brooklyn Pipeline as environmental racism, furthering the disproportionate burden of toxins in BIPOC communities and worsening health disparities. Carrying signs reading "National Grid is a climate colonizer," and "We won’t pay to poison NYC," organizers state that fracked gas is a dangerous greenhouse gas, and in the face of climate disasters such as Hurricane Ida, leaders must divest from fossil fuel use immediately.

Last month, the Public Service Commission approved National Grid's proposal to increase the gas bills of all customers in NYC to make up the nearly $129 million the company spent on the pipeline. The No North Brooklyn Pipeline coalition has launched a gas bill strike encouraging New Yorkers to withhold $66, the cost of the pipeline per NYC ratepayer, from their National Grid gas bill.

“The fact that National Grid is THE headline partner of Climate Week NYC reveals a very disturbing reality for humanity and our planet. Our reality is that ‘climate orgs’ like Climate Week NYC is uplifting corporate gas utility colonizers like National Grid in their showcasing of “leading climate action” while they build a new fracked gas pipeline through poor, working class, BIPOC communities in North Brooklyn- National Grid is environmentally racist. This ‘climate action leader’ continues to lock in our public dependency on fossil fuels as climate catastrophes become commonplace. Shame on Climate Week NYC for not doing their research and for clearly prioritizing money and partners over real climate justice for NYC.” - Jen Chantrtranapichate, Frack Outta Brooklyn (FOBK) Coalition

“My hope for this week of action is accountability. We must be calling out the two-sided nature of these corporate entities pretending to care about fixing our current situation while directly contributing to it!” Said Aderinsola Babawale, activist and artist with Brownsville Green Justice. “National Grid being a UK-based company is continuing a legacy of colonialism building this exploitive toxic infrastructure through black and brown communities like mine, which directly contributes greenhouse gas emissions that are fueling the climate & ecological crisis globally! Construction on this pipeline project runs gas through Brownsville, BedStuy, Bushwick, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint from Pennsylvania while charging the residents in our neighborhoods more for gas that simply won’t service us. We are fighting an uphill battle against established monopolies of energy that are trying to dictate how we move forward without a sense of responsibility for the people reliant on them so there seems to be a cognitive dissonance between actions taken and statements made, as this pipeline isn’t helping
us meet goals agreed upon during the Paris climate accords like reducing global emissions to 1.5 degree C tipping point. This is happening in real time so we must act with urgency to shut down the flow of gas now while we make a switch to viable alternatives like wind, solar and geothermal energy to end reliance on fossil fuels and gas, and develop a sustainable energy model.”

“What National Grid counts on always is for these marginalized communities to not fight back,” said Pati Rodriguez, organizer at Mi Casa Resiste and Frack Outta Brooklyn Coalition. “Fracked gas in other states has contaminated the air and water. The fumes are toxic and can cause cancer and asthma. And it is the clear from the map of this project, this pipeline has been placed in Black and brown, working-class neighborhoods. Yet state official ignore the harm and gave it a rubber stamp of approval. We need to turn the toxic gas off now, National Grid...We hope that everyone here today, and everyone looking at National Grid’s charade of claiming they are some kind of climate justice supporter, please call them out. We all need to call them out. We can't continue to poison Black and brown families. We all deserve to live with dignity and respect. We all deserve to live in clean conditions, clean air, clear water.”

“The world deserves real climate justice. Let me be clear: National Grid is actively harming the climate and the communities of Brooklyn. The greenwashing of corporations, and fossil fuel corporations at that, claiming to be ‘climate leaders’ makes me so frustrated, but it also makes me feel heartbroken. All the resources that go into building fracked gas infrastructure, and misleading the public about it, could be going towards true climate resilience and energy solutions. We owe it to future generations to fight for the environment. The IPCC report recently highlighted how dangerous it is to continue using methane and fracked gas. The climate crisis is real and it is happening now, and the most vulnerable communities will be impacted first,” said Anna Tsomo of Sane Energy Project. “This pipeline is going to make people sick, worsen racial health disparities, further our dependence on a fossil fuel industry that is harming us, and National Grid is making us pay for it. The corporate greed is stunning. There will be no economy if there is no livable planet. We must demand that people come before profit.”

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Donate to Frack Outta Brooklyn Coalition here.
Donate to Indigenous Kinship Collective here.
Donate to frontline resistance to the Line 3 Pipeline via Giniw Collective here.
NOTES TO THE EDITOR

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