

April 12, 2018

Governor Charles D. Baker  
Massachusetts State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Harriette L. Chandler, Senate President  
Massachusetts State House, Room 332  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker of the House  
Massachusetts State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker, Senate President Chandler, and House Speaker DeLeo:

Physicians for Policy Action is a health advocacy group of more than 130 physicians, nurses and health professionals, based at Harvard Medical School. We write to you to express our strong opposition to any expansion of methane ('natural') gas infrastructure in Massachusetts.

Methane gas is a fossil fuel with potent greenhouse gas effects. The extraction of methane gas poses clear health dangers to individuals living near hydraulic fracturing sites in Pennsylvania, Colorado and Texas, and there are additional hazards and health concerns along the entire pipeline distribution system. Massachusetts has more than 16,000 gas leaks from our aging distribution infrastructure; these leaks pose health risks to people living nearby and contribute significantly to our state's greenhouse gas emissions. One hundred-fifty public health professionals met in January at Boston University to review the health concerns related to methane gas infrastructure in Massachusetts, and more than 50 municipal boards of health have written to Governor Baker expressing health concerns about methane gas infrastructure in the state.

We understand that the residents and businesses of Massachusetts need safe, reliable and affordable energy. Our state can and must achieve this by investing in energy efficiency and non-polluting energy sources, rather than committing to long-term reliance on more fossil fuels that generate climate change, pollute the air, and create health hazards. Attorney General Maura Healey's November 2015 analysis confirms that Massachusetts does not need further methane gas infrastructure to meet our state's energy requirements.

The American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association have called on policy-makers to take immediate action to address climate change and to move away from our reliance on fossil fuels. For the health of Massachusetts residents, we urge you to reject the expansion of methane gas infrastructure in our state. Massachusetts can and should be a leader in the transition to a clean energy future.

Regina LaRocque, MD, MPH  
Nesli Basgoz, MD  
Charles Hardin, MD, PhD  
Kathryn Hibbert, MD