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September 18, 2018

The Honorable Charles D. Baker  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

The series of hazardous and fatal natural gas fires and explosions that occurred in Northeastern Massachusetts and Western Pennsylvania last week underscored the grave threat to public safety posed by the siting of volatile natural gas pipeline infrastructure in proximity to residential communities. In light of these and other devastating pipeline safety emergencies, I am writing to respectfully request that you commence a comprehensive safety review of the West Roxbury Lateral Segment of the Algonquin Incremental Market Project and the proposed construction, as part of the Atlantic Bridge Project, of a natural gas-fired compression station in the Town of Weymouth. Both the West Roxbury Lateral Pipeline and the planned site for the Weymouth Compressor Station are located in densely-populated residential areas.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, residents of Center Township, Pennsylvania were forced to evacuate their homes following a natural gas pipeline explosion that sent flames shooting 150 feet in the air, destroyed one house, and collapsed several high-voltage power lines and electrical towers. Many evacuees required medical assistance. Only two days later, thousands of residents in the City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, the Town of North Andover, and surrounding communities in the Merrimack Valley Region were forced to evacuate their homes amid fires, explosions, and gas odors reportedly related to an over-pressurized natural gas line. This devastating incident affected an estimated 8,600 homes and businesses in the area, destroyed as many as 80 buildings, and has resulted in at least one fatality. It has also caused fire-related, traumatic blast, and other injuries to over 25 residents. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, a new and unrelated natural gas leak was detected and reported in Lawrence.

Regrettably, these are not isolated incidents. According to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ("PHMSA"), last year witnessed an estimated 650 reported pipeline incidents resulting in 20 fatalities and injuries to 35 individuals. In 2018, PHMSA reports that pipeline incidents have already led to at least three fatalities and injuries to 33 individuals. According to the agency, these incidents can involve the release of highly-volatile liquids, the release of liquids that cause unintentional fires or explosions, and other hazardous events.

Clearly, public safety demands a stem-to-stern safety review of local pipeline projects, including the West Roxbury Lateral Segment and the proposed Weymouth Compressor Station, located in or near residential communities. The West Roxbury project places high-pressure natural gas pipeline infrastructure directly across the street from an active quarry blast zone and in the middle of Boston's densely-populated West Roxbury neighborhood, in dangerous proximity to schools, assisted-living facilities, and other community buildings. Similarly, the Weymouth project would install a 7,700-horsepower natural gas compressor station within a half mile of nearly 1,000 households in North Weymouth as well as local schools, parks, and other public facilities.

In order to better safeguard our local communities against the devastating impact of a pipeline safety emergency, I again respectfully urge you to initiate a comprehensive safety review of these ill-advised projects. Thank you in advance for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



STEPHEN F. LYNCH

Member of Congress (MA-08)