



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

July 14, 2017

The Honorable Robert L. Hedlund
Mayor of the Town of Weymouth
Weymouth Town Hall
75 Middle Street
East Weymouth, MA 02189

Dear Mayor Hedlund:

Thank you for your continued leadership as Mayor of the Town of Weymouth, specifically around the issue of the proposed natural gas compression station in North Weymouth. As you know, the Lieutenant Governor and I place tremendous value on the work that our administration does to directly engage municipalities and partner with them to ensure that the needs of communities throughout Massachusetts are being met.

We recognize the serious concerns that have been raised by many, including constituents in your town and neighboring communities, regarding a proposed natural gas compressor station to be sited along the Fore River. Although the siting of compressor stations is primarily regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Commonwealth need not and will not remain silent during this process. I have directed several state agencies to take immediate actions to both investigate the issues some have raised regarding the project's potential impacts and gather additional public health data to supplement the information available in the environmental permitting process.

Assessing Air Quality Impacts on Public Health

The administration has heard members of the public express concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed project on air quality and public health in the neighboring community. I am therefore directing the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Public Health to jointly prepare a public health impacts assessment. This assessment will document the current background air levels at the site and the current health status of the community. It will also consider the future air quality impacts of the proposed project on public health. This assessment will be completed prior to the issuance of any air permits by the Department of Environmental Protection, and the results will be shared with your office.

Public Safety Threat Review

The administration has also heard members of the public express concerns regarding the possible threat to public safety that a project of this sort poses to the neighboring community. The federal Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is the authority charged with ensuring that pipeline projects are constructed and operated safely. While this is a federal agency and its activities are outside of state jurisdiction, I am directing the Secretary of Public Safety and the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to work with your office to facilitate an opportunity for the public to bring their concerns directly to PHMSA. I believe the federal regulators should hear firsthand—and then address—the concerns raised by community members.

Climate Resilience Review

Finally, the Commonwealth's Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) will be reviewing the project's safety and reliability under coastal storm conditions, taking into account rising sea levels. Given the elevation and proximity of the proposed project site to coastal waters, it is susceptible to flooding and waves during storm events under present and future conditions, including current FEMA mapped flood hazard zones and hurricane inundation areas. I am directing CZM to request additional information from the project proponent in an effort to achieve a conclusive and definitive understanding of what the specific flooding and inundation risks are and what potential effects of future sea level rise may be given the design life of the facility. CZM will request information and analysis and details on design and other measures to avoid and mitigate risks from inundation and storm damage and how the project will incorporate design and other best practices to be resilient to storms and sea level rise. CZM will also review how the public safety concerns referenced above will be affected by flood risks and will request more information on public access at and near the project site.

The Commonwealth finds itself at an energy crossroads. As older power generators retire, we must diversify the state's energy portfolio. This means both pursuing new sources of renewable energy and expanding our natural gas capacity. While we continue to believe that this multi-pronged strategy is vital to controlling the costs of energy, providing reliability, and protecting the Commonwealth's environment, we also understand the importance of weighing all of the potential impacts on local communities. The Baker-Polito Administration, is committed to ensuring the community's concerns are heard fully, and will work with you to ensure the needs of the people of Weymouth are given due and timely consideration by the federal regulators making the primary decisions regarding this project.

Sincerely,



Charles D. Baker
Governor