

Dear Governor Baker:

Sixty years ago, residents of Ipswich, concerned about the proposed destruction of a productive wetland in their town, found a way to protect that natural resource. Their success led to the passage of the Massachusetts Conservation Commission Act of 1957. Since then, conservation commissions across the state have been advocates for and protectors of the natural environment: developing open space and conservation plans, managing conservation lands, and protecting wetlands, waterways, and biodiversity.

With that mandate in mind, we are writing to ask you to end your support for new interstate gas pipelines. We think that would be an important next step after your notable Executive Order 569: Establishing an Integrated Climate Change Strategy for the Commonwealth.

We need safe, reliable, and affordable energy for our residents, businesses, and municipalities. Our state can – and must - achieve those goals by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency, rather than in more fossil fuel use that is warming our planet and creating significant problems for our cities and towns.

New interstate pipelines create permanent cuts in the landscape, traversing conservation lands, crossing wetlands, despoiling vistas and forests, and disrupting farms, residential properties, and communities with little regard for community plans or needs. With federal pre-emption they even override conservation land protections set forth in Article 97 of our state constitution. And the gas they transport adds significant amounts of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, exacerbating climate change.

With climate change, our cities and towns will be facing more violent storms, more extreme precipitation, and longer periods of unremitting heat in the summer months. Communities along our beautiful coastline are making plans to defend themselves against sea level rise. Inland communities must protect against costly river flooding that washes out roads and buildings and ruins people's lives. Climate change will disrupt our state's natural ecosystems and built infrastructure.

We in Massachusetts are able to experience the four seasons here at home. Our state is richly endowed with the bounties of nature. A major

challenge of our time is to mitigate climate change and preserve what we have inherited and worked to achieve for current and future generations. New fossil fuel pipelines are part of the problem, not part of the solution. We urge you to oppose them.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Name of Conservation Commission