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Chapter

**Testimony, Massachusetts Sierra Club, Thursday, February 25, 2016, 2 PM.  
MA Department of Public Utilities, South Station, Boston.  
Public Hearing on Docket 15-181.**

Hello. My name is Cathy Buckley and I chair the Massachusetts Sierra Club. Thank you for this opportunity to express our opposition to 15-181. I speak on behalf of our 50,000 members and supporters in Massachusetts, our colleagues in the entire northeast also facing these challenges, especially those in Pennsylvania and Ohio who now suffer the direct effects of fracking.

For the sake of staying within three minutes, I will not mention a myriad of issues, and will include those in written testimony. I will address climate change, the state of the fossil fuel/utility industry, and fairness/foolishness.

There are a host of indicators screaming at us that the climate situation is dire. I will share a couple.

My son was born two weeks after Hurricane Hugo hit our Atlantic coastline in 1989. Hugo was then, according to insurance statistics, the most destructive storm in US history. By 2012, less than a quarter century later, Hugo was no longer in the top ten. 1989 also is the last year that average atmospheric CO2 was at 350 parts per million. It is now at 400.

Let's look at flooding. For the fifty years from 1955 through 2004, Boston experienced 84 Coastal Flood days, on average almost 17 per decade. In the last decade, there were 57 - more than tripling the rate of the previous half-century.

Turning to the industry we are being asked to subsidize, I'll read a couple of recent headlines:  
Bloomberg: Half of U.S. Fracking Companies Will Be Dead or Sold This Year.  
Reuters: Debt and equity investors have all but given up on the exploration and production sector as oil prices tumble lower.

We are being asked to pay for pipelines that will be empty soon, either because: 1) the fracking companies will have gone bankrupt and/or 2) the enormity of the climate consequences will finally knock some serious sense into us.

If Saudi Arabia knew they could sell oil for the next century, why would they sell it at \$30 a barrel, when they've received as much as \$147? Because they know they can't. And \$30 is better than zero. A Saudi Arabian oil minister acknowledged this over 40 years ago. They know we have to leave it in the ground. The present frenzy is ultimately driven by fear and greed on the part of the industry - they must sell their stuff before the fossil-fuel age ends.

The federal government has removed almost all home rule in regard to the placement of these pipelines. One thing they have not done is to force us to pay for them. It is still up to Massachusetts and the other sovereign states to decide whether we will pick up the tab. Private investors are not interested. The utility-pipeline complex is telling us to bail them out. This complex, that has deep pockets for television ads, lobbyists, and exorbitant executive salaries and bonuses, cannot afford their pipelines. This is the opposite of the Robin Hood tax. This is 'hood robbing' - invading our neighborhoods and robbing us of our hard-earned dollars to support the rich pipeline-utility cartel.

I can imagine the pressure you are under in making your decision. What a plum prize it would be for the cartel to get Massachusetts ratepayers to pay for their pipelines.

I implore you to counter that pressure by flashing forward a quarter-century to 2041. One of your grandchildren is listening to their mom or dad telling them about the time that their grandparent courageously stood up to the prevailing powers and said, "If you want your perilous pipelines, you are going to have to pay for them yourselves. We will have no part of this folly."