

March 2017

Honorable Charles Baker
Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

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 preemption 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,

Amherst Conservation Commission
Andover Conservation Commission
Arlington Conservation Commission
Ashburnham Conservation Commission
Ashby Conservation Commission
Ashfield Conservation Commission
Ayer Conservation Commission
Becket Conservation Commission
Brimfield Conservation Commission
Boxford Conservation Commission
Brookline Conservation Commission
Buckland Conservation Commission
Burlington Conservation Commission
Carlisle Conservation Commission
Charlemont Conservation Commission
Chesterfield Conservation Commission
Dover Conservation Commission
Framingham Conservation Commission
Franklin Conservation Commission
Great Barrington Conservation Commission
Hanson Conservation Commission
Harvard Conservation Commission
Haverhill Conservation Commission
Hull Conservation Commission
Ipswich Conservation Commission
Lancaster Conservation Commission
Leverett Conservation Commission
Leyden Conservation Commission
Lynn Conservation Commission
Manchester Conservation Commission
Marblehead Conservation Commission
Melrose Conservation Commission
Middleborough Conservation Commission
Natick Conservation Commission
New Marlborough Conservation
Commission
Newton Conservation Commission
Northampton Conservation Commission

Northfield Conservation Commission
Oak Bluffs Conservation Commission
Palmer Conservation Commission
Petersham Conservation Commission
Plainfield Conservation Commission
Plymouth Conservation Commission
Provincetown Conservation Commission
Richmond Conservation Commission
Rockport Conservation Commission
Royalston Conservation Commission
Salisbury Conservation Commission
Saugus Conservation Commission
Shirley Conservation Commission
Somerville Conservation Commission
Southbridge Conservation Commission
Stoneham Conservation Commission
Sturbridge Conservation Commission
Topsfield Conservation Commission
Tyringham Conservation Commission
Wales Conservation Commission
Warwick Conservation Commission
Wayland Conservation Commission
Webster Conservation Commission
Wellesley Natural Resources Commission
Wellfleet Conservation Commission
West Bridgewater Conservation
Commission
West Stockbridge Conservation
Commission
Weston Conservation Commission
Weymouth Conservation Commission
Whately Conservation Commission
Williamsburg Conservation Commission
Wilmington Conservation Commission
Winchendon Conservation Commission
Winthrop Conservation Commission
Woburn Conservation Commission
Worcester Conservation Commission
Wrentham Conservation Commission