

For Immediate Release  
June 19, 2015

Contact: Emily Norton  
(617) 423-5775  
emily.norton@sierraclub.org



## Northampton City Council Says “Plug Those Gas Leaks”

[Boston, MA June 19, 2015] The Northampton City Council last night voted unanimously in favor of a resolution demanding transparency from Massachusetts gas companies, and endorsing statewide legislation to tackle natural gas leaks in our state's infrastructure.

The resolution offers endorsement for bill H. 2870, “An act relative to protecting consumers of gas and electricity from paying for leaked and unaccounted for gas.” This bill, filed by Representative Lori Ehrlich and Senator Jamie Eldridge, will reduce natural gas leaks by financially incentivizing utilities to make repairs to pipes and eventually disallowing the cost of “lost and unaccounted for” gas from being passed on to consumers.

“The residents of Northampton, and everyone throughout Western Massachusetts, deserve complete transparency from the gas companies that serve this area,” said Alisa Klein, Northampton City Councilor from Ward 7. “By upgrading and fixing existing pipeline infrastructure, the gas companies would have no need to lay a new pipeline, would prevent methane leaks that pose serious risks to our health and safety, would protect our climate from the dangerous greenhouse effects of leaked methane, and would save ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars by not having to pay for leaked, unaccounted for gas.”

The prevalence of gas leaks was revealed in a Harvard University [study](#) showing Greater Boston's natural gas leaks to be more extensive, expensive, and damaging to the climate than was previously believed. The study estimated that gas leaks cost customers \$90 million per year in Greater Boston alone.

“The Northampton City Council has shown real leadership. Their vote in support of this gas leaks bill says they care about reducing energy costs for residents, local businesses and the city, and about reducing greenhouse gases,” said Emily Norton, Director of the Sierra Club Massachusetts chapter. “We think it makes a lot more sense to meet the Commonwealth’s energy needs by plugging up existing leaks and expanding clean renewable sources, rather than building more pipelines.”

### **ABOUT Massachusetts Sierra Club**

Sierra Club is the nation's oldest and most effective grassroots environmental group. The Massachusetts Chapter was established over four decades ago and has a strong track record of enabling Bay Staters to “enjoy, explore and protect the planet.” For more information visit us at [masssierraclub.org](http://masssierraclub.org), [www.facebook.com/MassSierraClub](https://www.facebook.com/MassSierraClub) or @MassSierraClub.

###