Mary Craig –Rehoboth Reporter

A response to Mr. Cavanagh…

In your letter of May 10 you implied that more gas supplies were needed to bring the cost of our electric bills down. More gas supplies through Spectra’s Energy’s Access Northeast pipeline will be bringing along with it more gas with a heavy price tag. Why should we**,** the ratepayers in Massachusetts pay the proposed new pipeline expansion to thetune of $3.2 billion as a tariff (tax) in our electric bills? Two very important measures were recently passed in regards to the Access Northeast project- the first in Oct/2015. The MA Department of Public Utilities (DPU) (Yes, the very entity in charge of fixing our leaky Algonquin pipeline!), **ruled** **that electric companies may now forge long term contracts for capacity on proposed pipelines and sell that capacity to power generators on the spot market, and then pass the costs on to the ratepayers.** When did it become mandatory for private citizens to bear the financial risk for private corporate profits? This is unprecedented and probably illegal. We have been told Spectra’s Access Northeast will bring our electric bills down. Where is our assurance that our over-reliance (64% current dependence + 35%more gas= 99% over dependency) on a single nonrenewable fossil fuel will bring us savings? Should we move forward with this project because they say so? Where private corporations stand to gain high profits how can we naively believe them? All I see is the taxpayers will have to bear the cost of paying for this project and we will be on the hook for 35% more volumes of lost gas through our leaky pipes!

The second notable development concerning Access Northeast was inFebruary 2016. **The US Department of Energy** **approved Pipeline exports of domestic natural gas to Canada for re-export through liquidated shipping ports.** This federal legislative nod to open the exporting floodgates is fundamental to Spectra Energy’s pipeline plan. Where do you think Spectra’s PA Marcellus shale gas is headed? Straight through New England and into Canada on the Access Northeast pipeline highway!

Our nation’s fracking “gold rush” has resulted in a glut of gas reserves that far exceeds any domestic need, causing gas prices to plummet. It is imperative for Spectra’s bottom line to get their gas reserves out of the country ASAP and into the world market where high demand will drive up the price of gas. High profits for Spectra and the utilities will raise the cost of gas on the world market and will end up raising our prices too.

This monopolized energy plan with its over-reliance on domestic gas is a recipe for disaster. History has shown fossil fuels are subject to volatile price swings, and although the profits initially look promising to private companies such as Spectra, there are no guarantees. Couple this uncertainty with the astronomical delivery and liquefaction costs and with the fact that gas is a fossil fuel is a finite resource, and it is not surprising they want us to pay for their pipeline!. The Access Northeast pipeline with its dangerous compressor stations and massive LNG storage facilities could potentially sit idle and abandoned-a permanent blight on our landscape for generations to come**. Instead of continuing to over invest in an outdated fossil fuel infrastructure, we should be striving for a diversified energy mix consisting of hydro power, land-based and off shore wind and other renewable energy resources as well as a balanced role for** **natural gas.** Let’s get our utility companies to fix the existing problems we have with leaking pipelines which will reduce the lost gas expense and GHG climate change causing emissions.

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