

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

January 9, 2019

His Excellency Governor Charles D. Baker
Massachusetts State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

As the state legislative delegation for the South Shore communities affected by the proposed natural gas compressor station in Weymouth, we want to thank you for directing state agencies and financial resources to initiate a Health Impact Assessment (“HIA”) of the existing health conditions in the Fore River Basin.

Upon reviewing the HIA, in addition to the overwhelming information related to this project available, we believe there is more than enough evidence to prove that this location is inappropriate for the siting of a natural gas compressor station. For this reason, we respectfully ask for your consideration in rejecting the air quality permits.

Specific to the HIA, current levels of formaldehyde and benzene were measured during the HIA and showed the Fore River Basin is already above the recommended limits set by the Department of Environmental Protection for these carcinogens.¹

Given the profound public safety, health, and environmental risks that natural gas compressor stations pose, they are almost always built in rural areas and far away from population centers. Of the existing compressor stations located near Weymouth, three of them are sitting on an average of 60 acres. The station in Agawam, Massachusetts sits on 41 acres, the station in Charlton, Massachusetts sits on 34 acres, and the station in Chaplin, Connecticut sits on 104 acres.² The proposed Weymouth compressor station would sit on only 4.3 acres of buildable land, making this one of the smallest parcels containing a compressor station within an extremely densely populated region.³

This project will not only be precedent-setting with regard to parcel size and population density, it will also be the first compressor station sited on a public waterway. Considering the risks of leaks and water contamination associated with compressor stations, combined with the environmental struggles we already face as a Commonwealth and as a nation, approving the construction of the Weymouth compressor station would be an extremely dangerous precedent to set.

¹ *Health Impact Assessment Final Report*. Metropolitan Area Planning Council, MassDEP, MassDPH, 2019, foreriverhia.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Executive_Summary_20190104.pdf.

² *Atlantic Bridge Project Resource Report 8*. Spectra Energy Partners, 2019. https://www.weymouth.ma.us/sites/weymouthma/files/u311/rr8_atlantic-bridge_vol-ii-a_oct-2015_final.pdf

³ Foster, Steven. *A Study of Natural Gas Compressor Stations and Residential Property Values*. Lincoln Property Company, 2016.

In making your decision, we also encourage you to consider similar, recent cases in which neighboring states effectively stopped construction of dangerous projects by denying permits. In April 2016, the State of New York challenged Construction Pipeline Co. ("CPC")'s proposed 175-mile natural gas pipeline running from Pennsylvania to New York by rejecting a water quality certification permit. CPC immediately took New York to court and a little more than a year later the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of New York. On April 29, 2018, the United States Supreme Court rejected CPC's challenge to overturn the state's refusal to issue a needed water permit for the project.⁴

With the elevated levels of formaldehyde and benzene made apparent by both independent and state-contracted public health surveys, we have the scientific data needed to reject the air quality permit. The 4-acre parcel size, adjacency to a public waterway, and dense residential surroundings are factors that put grave responsibility on our shoulders to challenge Enbridge Energy and use the legal precedent set by New York. With this Supreme Court ruling, we have realistic and viable options for next steps in our fight to protect our communities and our environment.

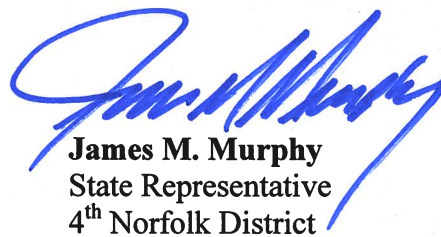
Massachusetts has been the first to make many great strides in health care, civil rights, and environmental justice. The siting of a compressor station on one of the smallest and exposed parcels of land must not be one of the precedents that this Commonwealth establishes. It is our obligation to challenge the construction of natural gas infrastructure and ensure that it is developed in the safest, most risk-averse manner possible.

Thank you again for your ongoing efforts in regard to the proposed natural gas compressor station in Weymouth. We truly appreciate your time in reading this letter and consideration of the facts presented.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. O'Connor
State Senator
Plymouth & Norfolk District



James M. Murphy
State Representative
4th Norfolk District

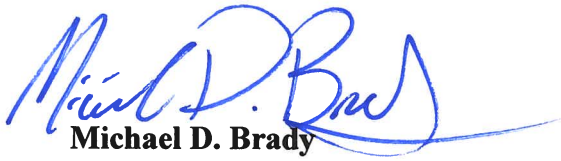


Ronald Mariano
House Majority Leader
3rd Norfolk District



John F. Keenan
State Senator
Norfolk & Plymouth District

⁴ Hurley, Lawrence. "U.S. Top Court Rejects Constitution Pipeline over New York Permit." *Reuters*, 30 Apr. 2018



Michael D. Brady
State Senator
2nd Plymouth & Bristol District



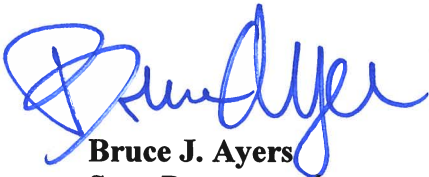
Walter F. Timilty
State Senator
Norfolk, Bristol & Plymouth District



Joan Meschino
State Representative
3rd Plymouth District



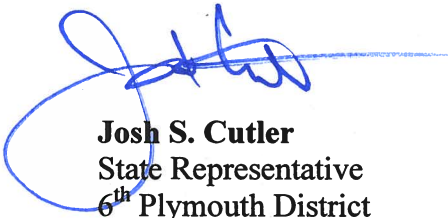
Tackey Chan
State Representative
2nd Norfolk District



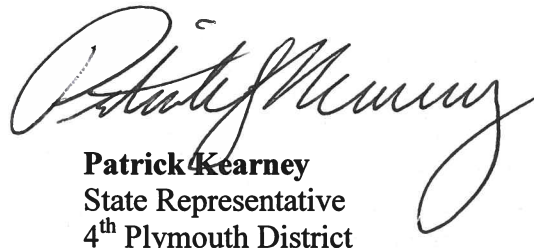
Bruce J. Ayers
State Representative
1st Norfolk District



Mark J. Cusack
State Representative
5th Norfolk District



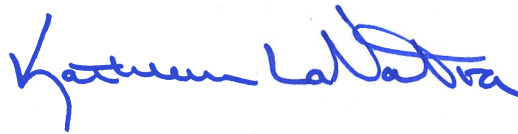
Josh S. Cutler
State Representative
6th Plymouth District



Patrick Kearney
State Representative
4th Plymouth District



Mathew Muratore
State Representative
1st Plymouth District



Kathleen P. LaNatra
State Representative
12th Plymouth District