



CONTACT
Linda Matys O'Connell
lmoconnell@gmail.com
mobile: 610-295-3125

EVERSOURCE LONGMEADOW-SPRINGFIELD PIPELINE FACT SHEET

Eversource wants to expand Springfield's natural gas infrastructure with a new high-pressure pipeline

The project and background: For many decades, much of Springfield has received its consumer gas supply through a pipeline (60 psi) from West Springfield carried across the Connecticut River by the Memorial Bridge. The proposed gas pipeline project would bring a second supply of gas north to Springfield from Longmeadow.

- The project was originally conceived as one part of a five-part, so-called "reliability" project by the now-defunct Columbia Gas of Massachusetts in 2017. Eversource, the largest energy company in New England, acquired Columbia's operations after that company was barred from operating in Massachusetts following the catastrophic 2018 gas explosions in the Merrimack Valley. Eversource Gas of Massachusetts is proceeding with that project.
- Eversource's current proposed plan is the fifth and final project piece: to tap into the Tennessee Gas interstate gas pipeline running west to east through Longmeadow and lay a new, 16-inch high-pressure (200 psi) pipeline north to Springfield.
- The pipeline would originate at a newly constructed "point of delivery" (POD) station on land purchased from the Longmeadow Country Club and terminate at the existing regulator station in downtown Springfield. The downtown Springfield regulator station, called the Bliss Street station in regulatory filings, sits on Columbus Avenue across I-91 from MGM Way by Riverfront Park near the public gathering area next to the restored railroad terminal building.
- Eversource has proposed a preferred route and three alternatives for the pipeline. All the routes travel through residential areas of the city and through the edge or center of Forest Park. See page 5.
- Eversource claims that what it now calls the Western Massachusetts Natural Gas Reliability Project is necessary to "improve system reliability" to approximately 58,000 gas customers in Agawam, West Springfield, Southwick, Springfield, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, and Chicopee.
- Three other parts of the original "reliability" project have been completed.

The fourth part of the project involving a new pipeline to Holyoke and an increased gas supply to Northampton was abandoned in 2019 after both cities rejected the plan.

Where we are now: Eversource continues to claim that it will submit its plan for the Longmeadow-Springfield pipeline to the state's Energy Facilities Siting Board, despite numerous delays. The EFSB filing will begin what is anticipated to be a two-year state permitting process. The company revealed multiple possible routes for the pipeline into Springfield and conducted virtual "open houses" for public comment in late 2021 (see p. 5 here). The citizens of Longmeadow are mounting resistance to the construction to the project. The Longmeadow Town Meeting has passed ordinances opposing the construction of fossil fuel infrastructure in residential areas and has allocated legal fee funds to fight the project. The Springfield City Council sub-committee on Environment & Sustainability held a hearing with Eversource; committee chair Jesse Lederman subsequently called on the Mass. Department of Public Utilities for an independent cost-benefit analysis of the project.

Expanding fossil fuel infrastructure is costly – and a bad investment of ratepayer dollars

The estimated \$35 million to \$45 million price tag for the project will be tacked onto Eversource Gas of Massachusetts ratepayers' bills. That's only part of the total \$860 million cost ratepayers will bear for the system-

wide “reliability” upgrades Eversource is conducting as part of the Comprehensive Safety Assessment and Implement Plan agreed to as part of the Columbia Gas acquisition. This investment is proposed at a time when the dire effects of climate change and the need to transition away from fossil fuels have never been more apparent.

- Eversource has a financial incentive to construct the pipeline. The public company’s shareholders profit when Eversource builds infrastructure – not when it makes repairs. Repairs are expenses. New pipe in the ground is capital investment, funded by ratepayers. Capital investment increases shareholder equity, which results in more money for the shareholders. Massachusetts utility regulations allow Eversource a return on equity of 9.67 percent.
- If the new POD station and high-pressure pipeline are built, Springfield ratepayers will be paying for Eversource shareholder profits and paying even more for the “stranded assets” in the expanded infrastructure as the transition to green energy proceeds and the gas customer base shrinks.
- In the long term, a social justice issue arises if the burden falls increasingly harder on those who cannot readily afford to make the switch to more efficient electric options.

The pipeline proposal is unhealthy – and Springfield still struggles with environmental justice

Public health leaders have been outspoken in making it clear that gas is associated with health hazards and reduced social welfare at all stages of its production and use. Gas infrastructure contributes to both outdoor and indoor air pollution. The public health impacts are not felt equally across communities: Low-income and black and brown communities with underlying health conditions and less access to health care are far more at risk.

- Despite air quality improvements, Springfield remains among the “asthma capitals” of the United States as measured by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of the United States. One in five children and adults in the city suffer from asthma, which is exacerbated by air pollution.
- Methane leaks from gas infrastructure creates toxic ozone, which kills 80,000 vulnerable people per year.
- Any burning of natural gas releases air pollutants including carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, sulfur dioxide, formaldehyde, and fine particulate matter.
- Exposure to these chemicals and particulates, especially in the home, has been found to contribute to asthma, carbon monoxide poisoning, COPD, neurological developmental issues in small children, and heart and vascular disease.
- Gas extracted by fracking carries additional damaging chemicals introduced in the extraction process.
- Failure to effectively vent gas stoves exacerbates indoor air pollution. Low-income people cooking in smaller spaces experience a greater concentration of harmful pollution, and those who cannot maintain effective venting because of lack of means or uncooperative landlords are disparately put at risk of negative health effects.

The pipeline proposal is dangerous – and Springfield already suffered one catastrophic gas explosion

The threat of explosions and fires from gas infrastructure has been demonstrated time and again. The United States suffers at least one pipeline explosion a year at a great cost to communities, including forced evacuations, devastating destruction of homes and businesses, injury, loss of life – and the very real cost of emergency response. In its Comprehensive Safety Assessment and Implementation Plan created as part of the purchase of Columbia Gas, Eversource called the existing system a “high-risk asset in critical condition.”

- **2012 Springfield** – On the evening of Nov. 23, downtown Springfield was rocked by a catastrophic explosion when a Columbia Gas worker looking for a leak struck a high-pressure pipeline. One building was demolished. Forty-two buildings, including 115 residential units and a daycare center, were damaged. Ten Springfield firefighters and police officers were injured by the blast and flying debris. The area has yet to recover fully. Imagine the human cost if the explosion had occurred during daytime hours.

- **2018 Merrimack Valley** – Large explosions in three communities were caused by over-pressurized gas lines in three communities north of Boston. The explosions caused 80 fires, drove 50,000 people from their homes, injured 25 people and resulted in one death. At least 131 structures were damaged. The community has yet to recover fully.

The Commonwealth sued Columbia Gas for its responsibility in the explosions and fires that made international news. Columbia subsequently paid \$53 million dollars in criminal penalties and agreed to abandon all business in Massachusetts.
- **2021 Marshfield** – A gas pipeline fire on a residential street burned for nine hours because Eversource did not know the location of the shut-off valve in the old Columbia Gas system. Twelve homes had to be evacuated.
- **2021 Maynard** – A gas explosion and fire in a home in this close-knit community killed a 40-year resident and injured three first responders. The cause of the explosion has yet to be determined.
- **2021 Chicopee** – Chicopee Provision Co., producer of the regionally iconic Blue Seal kielbasa, was shut down by a gas explosion and fire in its factory after work hours. One employee suffered first-degree burns. The company hopes to reopen.

The pipeline proposal is climate-changing – and ignores the urgent need to reduce fossil fuel emissions

Life-threatening heat waves, rising sea levels, extreme weather events, increased flooding, wide-spread wildfires, searing droughts – The summer of 2021 made these previews of the most dire effects of climate change driven by cumulative fossil fuel emissions impossible to ignore. When the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the body responsible for assessing the science of climate crisis, released its 6th Assessment report in August, the U.N. Secretary General made the message clear:

“Code red for humanity.” A recent study shows Massachusetts warming faster than the rest of the planet.

- The U.N. panel concluded that the rise in the average global temperature will almost inevitably hit the crucial milestone of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by 2040 and that the climate crisis is on a course to get much worse in the next 20 years unless we take immediate, definitive action. Average temperatures in MA have risen an average of 3.5 degrees since 1900 compared to 2 degrees globally.
- Greenhouse gas emissions from the production, distribution and burning of fossil fuels including natural gas are a prime driver of global warming. At their best, gas pipelines leak emissions into the atmosphere.
- Natural gas is methane, which has recently been revealed to be 80 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide from coal and oil in the short term.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is leading in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In June 2021, the new Massachusetts “Climate Roadmap” statute went into effect. The law mandates net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with interim targets and regulatory deadlines across all sectors, including a 50 percent reduction by 2030.

- Each sector, including natural gas distribution and services, must meet strict emissions reductions standards.
- There are numerous additional bills in the legislative pipeline to facilitate and subsidize the transition to green energy, including the “Green Futures” Act co-sponsored by Senator Adam Gomez and Springfield Representatives Orlando Ramos, Jake Oliveira, Carlos Gonzalez, and Bud Williams.
- The “Climate Roadmap” law requires that all new projects must be evaluated for their impacts on environmental justice communities and that greenhouse gas emissions must be factored into a wide range of development decisions.
- It is well documented that minority and low-income communities have suffered disparately severe impacts of environmental pollution on health and quality of life. How can laying a new high-pressure gas pipeline through environmental justice neighborhoods in Springfield not constitute a violation of legal mandates?

Springfield has the opportunity – and the responsibility – to lead in the right direction. Allowing the expansion of Springfield’s natural gas infrastructure is a step in the wrong direction. We will pay a significant opportunity cost if we do not act to curtail fossil fuel burning and emissions now.

- According to the Energy Information Administration, prices are approaching the tipping point after which it will become cheaper to generate electricity from solar and wind than from gas.
- Springfield should demand increased investment by Eversource in a rapid transition to electrification and clean, renewable sources of energy powering the grid.

The pipeline proposal is unnecessary – and Springfield can lead toward the future by rejecting it

- In its decades of operation, the current Memorial Bridge pipeline has remained secure and Eversource says it is currently in good condition.
- Eversource claims the Longmeadow-Springfield pipeline would serve as a backup to the existing Memorial Bridge pipeline in the event of an outage in that single supply. However, since both pipelines will feed into the single Springfield regulator station for distribution that claim is suspect.
- Also, both pipelines are also fed by the same interstate Tennessee Gas pipeline, another single source.
- If there are leaks in any pipes, repairing them is a better solution for Springfield ratepayers than to be left paying for expanded capacity as demand decreases.
- New law and policy demand that any “redundancy” in building and water heating should come in the form of electrification, not more gas infrastructure that will become obsolete.

Is Eversource a trusted source of information on the pipeline proposal?

- Eversource is a leader in the fossil fuel industry’s Consortium to Combat Electrification. Leaked documents from an industry presentation state that natural gas is “in for [the] fight of its life” and suggest the industry “take advantage of power outage fear” to bolster gas expansion plans.
- Eversource maintains the proposal is not about expansion but about “reliability.” However, in recent regulatory filings, the company projects an expansion of 2,500 Springfield area customers in five years.
- Springfield City Councilors Mike Fenton and Tim Allen have called out Eversource for withholding more than \$44 million in property taxes owed since 2012. Eversource is also withholding property taxes in 87 other Massachusetts municipalities.
- Eversource was fined \$1.8 million by Connecticut regulators in December 2021 for marketing materials that violated state law. The fine resulted from Attorney General William Tong’s call for an investigation of Eversource’s “high-pressure marketing tactics” in response to charges it used misleading information to induce home heating oil users to convert to gas. The petition called Eversource’s tactics “nothing short of alarming” noting they “speak volumes about their current desperation as a company.”

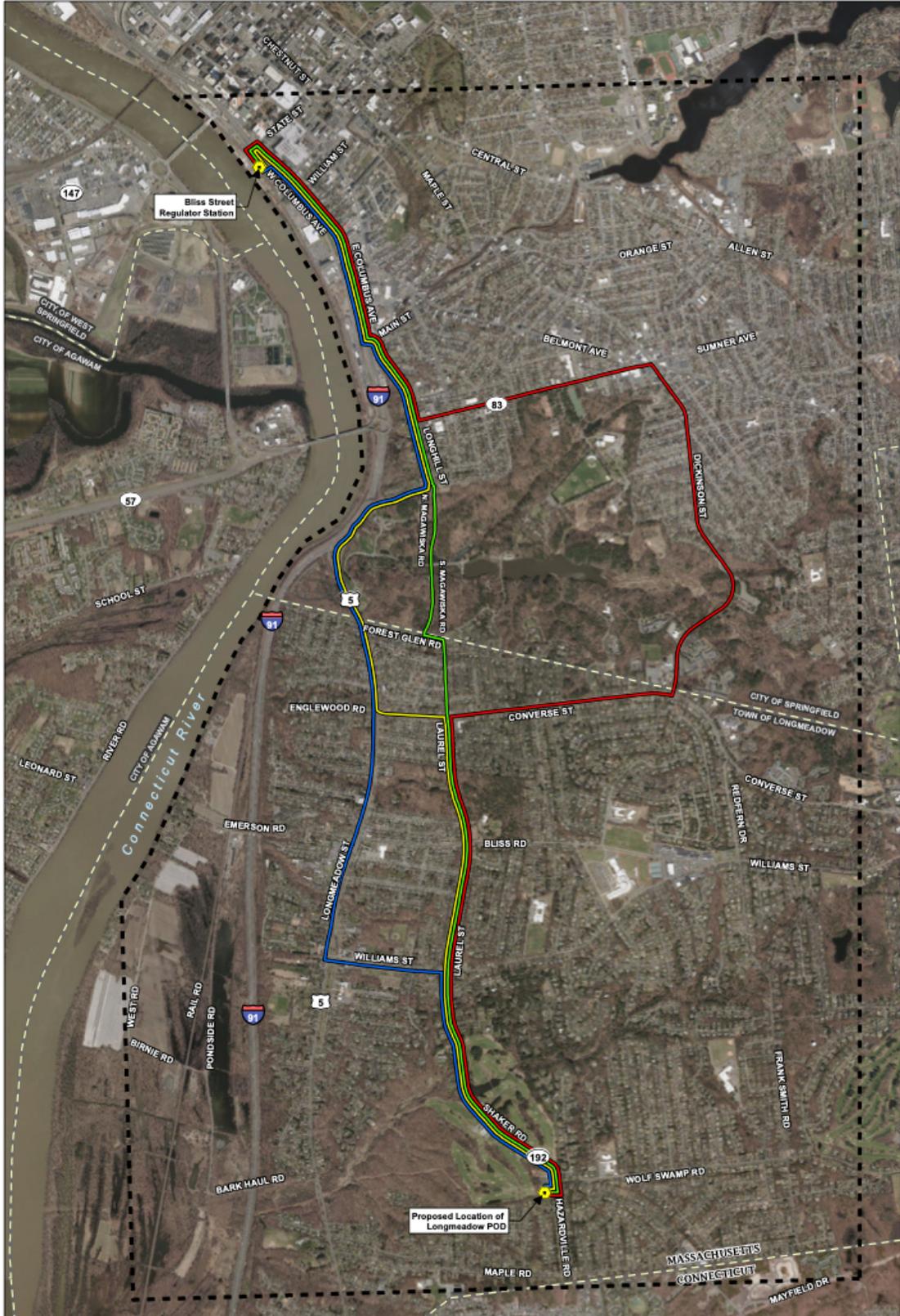
What we don’t know about the pipeline proposal

- Will expansion of the Springfield regulator station will be required to receive the new pipeline
- The quantifiable risk to the current system and net benefits of the project to ratepayers
- The environmental justice impact of the project
- How the plan can possibly comply with the mandates of the new Massachusetts climate law

What Springfield Must Do

- **Refuse to allow Eversource to construct its proposed Springfield pipeline**
- **Advocate instead for investment in rapid transition from natural gas to efficient electrification powered by clean, renewable sources of energy**

PROPOSED PIPELINE ROUTES MAP, NEXT PAGE



- █ Preferred Alternative
 - █ Preferred Alternative-Route Variation No. 1
 - █ Preferred Alternative-Route Variation No. 2
 - █ Noticed Alternative
 - Regulator Station
 - Study Area
 - Town Boundary
- Note: Routes are graphically enhanced for better illustration.



<p>Eversource Springfield-Longmeadow Reliability Project</p>
<p>Proposed Preferred Route and Noticed Alternative Springfield and Longmeadow, MA</p>