

STEPHEN F. LYNCH
8TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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September 30, 2020

The Honorable Neil Chatterjee
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, Northeast
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Chatterjee:

As representative of the 8th Congressional District of Massachusetts, I urge you to take immediate action and revoke the certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the Atlantic Bridge Project, including the Weymouth Compressor Station, owned and operated by Enbridge, Inc. After receiving notice from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration (PHMSA) earlier today regarding yet another dangerous blowout event experienced at the Weymouth Compressor Station site in the past two weeks, it should now be abundantly clear that this dangerous project presents an imminent public safety threat to the residents of Weymouth, Quincy, Abington and Braintree and surrounding communities and must be permanently suspended.

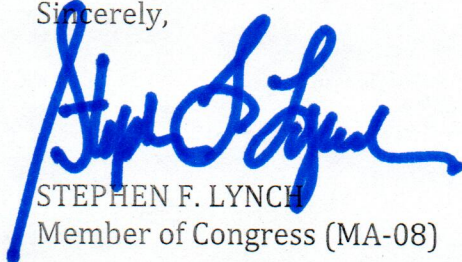
As reported by PHMSA, the Weymouth Compressor Station experienced another blowout event this morning involving the deployment of the compressor station's Emergency Shutdown System (ESD) - requiring the agency to order the temporary suspension of compressor operations and send PHMSA safety investigators to the scene. Public documents available on the Enbridge website explain that the purpose of an ESD system is to "block the flow of gas into the station and simultaneously vent any residential gas into the station's piping." While additional details on this latest safety incident are still under investigation, it marks the second time in two weeks that Enbridge has triggered the ESD at Weymouth. On September 11th, the facility leaked 265,000 standard cubic feet of natural gas from the facility as a result of a sump tank gasket failure during piping and equipment testing, calibration, and other commissioning activities. According to a notification letter from Enbridge to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the "line pressure was venting to atmosphere at ground level" and in order to "avoid an unsafe environment for station personnel," on-site employees manually triggered the ESD. Enbridge reported the total volume of the ESD operating the Weymouth Compressor Station on September 11th at 265,000 standard cubic feet and the total weight of Volatile Organic Compounds released at 35 pounds.

Clearly, the public safety threat stemming from a natural gas leak of this magnitude demands the immediate termination of this project. To the great detriment of the residents of the Town of Weymouth and its surrounding communities, the 7,700-horsepower Weymouth Compressor Station is located adjacent to the Fore River Bridge, within a half-mile of nearly 1,000 households in densely-populated North Weymouth, and in close proximity to several schools, parks, and other high-traffic areas. The siting and proposed operation of this project have been the source of longstanding safety, health, and environmental concerns on the part of South Shore residents, community safety groups, non-profit organizations, and local, state, and federal elected officials. The two blowout events in Weymouth have greatly exacerbated our concerns – particularly in the wake of the series of devastating natural gas explosions that occurred in the Merrimack Valley in 2018 and considering the marked increase in pipeline safety incidents reported by PHMSA over the last two decades.

In Congress, I have introduced the ***Pipeline and Compressor Safety Verification Act***, legislation that would require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to revoke the certificate of public convenience and necessity issued for the Weymouth Compressor Station until state authorities, including the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security for Massachusetts, the State Fire Marshal, and the Director of the Massachusetts Pipeline Safety Division, certify that the project will not pose a danger to surrounding residential communities and the general public. I strongly urge you to take corresponding action and immediately revoke the certificate of public convenience and necessity authorizing the construction and operation of this misguided and dangerous project.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress (MA-08)