

RETHINK NATURAL GAS TO PROTECT HEALTH, CLIMATE, AND RATEPAYERS

LD 2077 will reform Maine's natural gas distribution system to meet health, climate, and ratepayers' needs.

Maine's fracked gas distribution system threatens our climate goals and public health.

- Fracked "natural" gas poses immediate and ongoing threats to health, and the expansion and indefinite operation of Maine's gas system is inconsistent with statutory climate and clean energy goals.
- Methane, the major component of natural gas, is a climate super-pollutant that has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over 20 years. Research shows that methane leaks from distribution mains, services, and appliances within the home are systematically undercounted – including by the EPA methodology now used to account for Maine's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Burning gas for cooking and heating creates indoor air pollution linked to asthma in children, exposes people to carcinogens like benzene, and contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone or smog.
- Poor air quality and the associated impacts are notoriously inequitable. Pre-existing and chronic health conditions exacerbated by air pollution are associated with race, income, and age.



Business-as-usual for gas utilities harms communities and exacerbates ratepayer risks.

- Traditionally, gas utilities seek to expand their service areas and grow their customer bases and are entitled to recover the costs of these investments from ratepayers.
- This business-as-usual operation is inconsistent with major policy initiatives and funding opportunities promoting electrification, efficiency, and weatherization, including *Maine Won't Wait*, the State's four-year plan for climate action, and the federal Inflation Reduction Act.
- As more Maine people switch from volatile fossil fuel systems to high-efficiency electric heat pumps and cooktops, fewer ratepayers will remain on the gas system, and each individual ratepayer will bear a growing share of the costs of those investments.
- Because the timeline for Maine's emissions reductions – 45% by 2030, 80% by 2050, and net-zero by 2045 – is shorter than the standard 50-year economic life of utility infrastructure, ratepayers will be forced to keep paying for today's gas investments long after their useful lives.
- Continued expansion of the gas system makes this problem worse.

Thoughtful consideration and regulation of the gas distribution system will protect ratepayers, safeguard public health, and align Maine with statutory climate targets.

- LD 2077 would direct the state to investigate the costs to gas customers of gas system expansion; impacts to health and indoor air quality of fossil fuel combustion; and opportunities to redeploy Maine's existing gas infrastructure and workforce into geothermal heat districts.
- LD 2077 would also protect gas customers by prohibiting expansion of gas services into municipalities outside current gas utility service areas by January 2025 and prohibiting utility cost recovery from ratepayers for new gas service lines.

Support LD 2077. Protect People and Climate by Reforming the Future of Natural Gas.

For more information, please contact
Ania Wright, Sierra Club Maine at (207) 274-9265 or ania.wright@sierraclub.org;
Jack Shapiro, Natural Resources Council of Maine at (207) 622-3101 or jshapiro@nrcm.org;
or **Emily Green**, Conservation Law Foundation at egreen@clf.org



Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is an inclusive statewide alliance of 34 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.

We are counting on Maine policymakers to protect the extraordinary environment so all people and communities in Maine can thrive.



Acadia
Center



Conservation
Law Foundation



BICYCLE
COALITION
OF MAINE



Friends of Casco Bay
CASCO BAYKEEPER



Immigrant Welcome Center
GREATER PORTLAND

Gateway Community Services Maine



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

MAINE
AUDUBON



BE
OUTDOORS
APPALACHIAN MTN CLUB



MEEA
Maine
Environmental
Education
Association



MAINE
Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network



MPHA
Maine Public Health Association



passivhaus
MAINE



SIERRA CLUB
MAINE CHAPTER



Natural Resources
Council of Maine

southern maine
CONSERVATION
COLLABORATIVE



Physicians for Social Responsibility
Maine Chapter



Union of
Concerned Scientists
Science for a healthy planet and safer world

