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July 9, 2020

Mr. Thomas Cushing
Bureau of Air & Waste – Air Permit Chief
MassDEP Southeast Region
20 Riverside Drive
Lakeville, MA 02347

Dear Mr. Cushing,

I write to urge the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to require Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC (“Algonquin”), a subsidiary of Enbridge, Inc., to immediately halt its controlled venting of natural gas at the meter stations located at the Calpine Fore River Energy Center site and the Weymouth compressor station that is currently under construction.

Last week, Enbridge sent letters to MassDEP, municipal officials, fire departments, police departments, and residents in Weymouth, Braintree, Quincy, and Hingham, notifying them of its intention to conduct controlled natural gas venting operations intermittently between July 6 and July 13, 2020.¹ According to the notices, the releases are related to the pipeline tie-in activities at the Weymouth compression station, in order to connect the compressor station to the Algonquin natural gas pipeline system.

I am deeply troubled by Enbridge’s efforts to expose nearby residents and the environment to natural gas emissions, particularly in light of the June 3, 2020 court decision vacating the air permit accompanying the compressor station’s Non-Major Comprehensive Air Quality Plan.² Without a valid air quality permit or air quality plan, the company should not be allowed to continue with construction and should be expressly prohibited from releasing dangerous air emissions. Enbridge’s decision to begin natural gas venting—while citing the vacated Non-Major Comprehensive Air Quality Plan in its letter describing the activity to MassDEP—appears

¹ Letter from Brad Shamla, VP U.S. Ops, Enbridge, to Thomas Cushing, Air Permit Chief, MassDEP (June 30, 2020); Letter from Enbridge to Nearby Residents, Municipal Officials, Fire Depts., Police Depts. in Weymouth Braintree, Quincy, and Hingham (July 2020).

² *Town of Weymouth, Mass. v. Mass. Dep’t Env. Protection*, Nos. 19-1794, 19-1797, 19-1803, 2020 WL 2904672 (1st Cir. June 3, 2020).

to fully ignore the latest court decision in favor of proceeding with business-as-usual. This action should be prohibited under the vacation of the permit, without having to wait for a formal mandate. If the air permit is legally insufficient, the company should under no circumstances be trusted to perform deliberate releases of an air pollutant.

On June 18, 2020, I joined Senator Warren in asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to rescind its notice to proceed with construction on the Weymouth compressor station and direct Enbridge and its subsidiaries to stop construction, as the company no longer had all the necessary permits. Now, I respectfully request that MassDEP fulfill its duty to prevent unauthorized emissions of air pollutants and take enforcement action to immediately halt Algonquin's piping tie-in efforts and associated natural gas releases.

I thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator