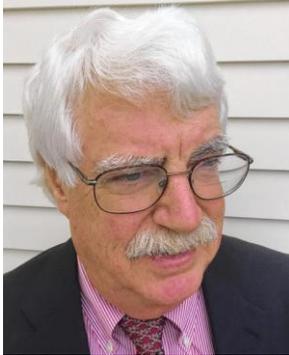


VIEWPOINT

Kinder Morgan pipeline: A citizen's perspective (Part 1)



By John Kieley

Friday, October 2, 2015

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Since this project was moved to Southern New Hampshire last December, we all have been inundated with information about it from all sides. I have attended several dozen informational sessions, hearings and community meetings. I have represented Temple at meetings with our Governor and our Congressional delegation, and have read numerous research reports on high-pressure natural gas pipelines. I am now firmly opposed to this project and will explain why.

Human health and safety

Emissions: There are several good studies on the impact of emissions from pipelines and compressor stations on human health. Given the pressure that is necessary to push billions of cubic feet of gas a day through a pipeline, there will be both unintentional leaks and regular releases of toxins that, surprisingly and sadly, are exempt from the Clean Air Act. Some examples of these toxins are: methane, iso-butane, nitrogen dioxide, naphthalene, benzene, hexane, toluene and styrene methylene chloride.

Examples of the known impact of those toxins on human health include damage to the liver, burning eyes and throat, dizziness and headaches.

Additionally, some of the emitted toxins including benzene, formaldehyde and styrene, are known or suspected carcinogens.

Methane is a known greenhouse gas and is 80 times more lethal than CO₂; its emission will further deplete our ozone layer thus adding to the global warming problem. Typical compressor stations release 15,000 cubic feet of methane into the environment with each "blowdown" or regular pressure release; the compressor station planned for New Ipswich is the largest ever built by Kinder Morgan and will regularly release much more. Not surprisingly, Kinder Morgan has methane release information as one of hundreds of to-be-determined in their FERC filings. It should be noted that while the city of Boston, in conjunction with Harvard University, has a major effort underway to repair leaks in its natural gas distribution system to cut back on greenhouse gases, this project would release huge volumes of these gases without any limits, controls or even reporting requirements.

Temple's Elementary School would be just over one-quarter mile from the proposed station. In addition to the risks that this would pose in the event of an explosion or fire, it would regularly subject students and staff to high levels of toxic emissions. The known effects of these emissions would render this beloved school unusable.

Police, fire, ambulance

The compressor station will be unmanned. The pipeline and control valves will be operated remotely from Texas, with emergency crews also coming from out of state.

The majority of towns along the proposed pipeline route have small police, fire and ambulance departments. There are many times when there is only one police officer on duty in each town and sometimes when our towns rely on State Police coverage.

There is no ability to gather sufficient manpower to conduct an evacuation, let alone to deal with an explosion or similar incident.

In Temple, the elementary school also serves as the Town of Temple's emergency shelter. Given its proximity to the largest and most dangerous industrial facility ever built in the region, the town would need to retrofit other buildings for this purpose.

Other towns along the pipeline face the same problem.

Construction

The project would not be "co-located" with the electric transmission line as Kinder Morgan states. It would be a "greenfield" project requiring the destruction of thousands of acres of forest, farmlands and wetlands — and even families' yards.

In rural areas like ours, FERC allows the thinnest walled pipe to be used and only requires shut-off valves every 20 miles. FERC's project manager said on Sept. 28 in New Ipswich that this is the result of a "risk analysis," i.e. if it blows it will only take out a few lives in rural areas. OK, I'm a senior citizen but our school kids are not cannon fodder!

This construction standard has the effect of increasing the likelihood of a significant incident and intensifies the effect of an incident on public safety as 20 miles of gas under high pressure feeds the resulting fire. In considering the probability of a major incident, keep in mind that Kinder Morgan's pipelines experience major "incidents" more frequently than once a month and, shockingly, installations since 2010 are more apt to fail than those constructed earlier. This timeline is consistent with Kinder Morgan's big push to build a massive pipeline structure in the United States.

The proposed pipeline would run parallel and in close proximity to a major electric transmission line. The electric line would likely ignite a release of gas under high pressure, and the intense heat that it creates. The electric transmission line itself would likely be damaged, thus interrupting the electricity supply to tens of thousands of New Hampshire homes and businesses.

The proposed New Ipswich compressor station site, and in fact much of the pipeline, is surrounded by large forested areas. In the event of an incident, there is a significant chance that a forest fire would result. Forest fire is the number one hazard facing the communities surrounding the compressor station site due to the large forested blocks, steep terrain, lack of road infrastructure and very limited firefighting resources.

While Kinder Morgan is currently proposing a single compressor station in New Hampshire, history suggests that additional compressor stations will be added in the future to increase the volume of gas that can be transported. Likely sites are in towns on the eastern and western sections of the proposed New Hampshire pipeline.

Wells, aquifers, reservoir

In close proximity to the proposed pipeline route there are literally thousands of private wells that residents rely on for drinking water. The pipeline would go over 18 miles of stratified drift aquifers and be in close proximity to a reservoir serving hundreds of in Greenville.

Several aspects of the construction and operation could adversely affect water sources, including blasting.

It should be particularly noted that the Greenville reservoir is fed by the wetlands and stream on the site of the proposed compressor station, thus ensuring that any compounds that get into the water on that site will quickly find their way into the reservoir.

Part 2 of John Kieley's Viewpoint will be published in Thursday's edition.
He is a resident of Temple and a member of Temple's Adhoc Pipeline Advisory Committee.

Kinder Morgan pipeline: A citizen's perspective (Part 2)

By John Kieley

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Economics

Property values and taxes: Land and residences in close proximity to the pipeline will decline dramatically in value. Who would want to live next to a pipeline carrying billions of cubic feet of gas a day, at nearly 1,500 PSI, when there are other similar properties in safe locations? Maybe that will change over time, but not in the intermediate term. And values will be impacted by future expansions in the pipeline corridor.

As properties in the section of a town near the pipeline decline in value, the tax revenue from those properties also declines. In order then to balance each town's income, the tax rate for all property owners must increase.

In towns that are members of a regional school district where the expenses are allocated in part based on assessed values, neighboring towns will also see tax increases as the property values in towns along the pipeline decrease.

Energy costs: Kinder Morgan has spent a lot of advertising money trying to convince New Hampshire residents that the pipeline will lower our energy costs. The truth is that energy costs will rise. Here are the facts:

The real reason for this pipeline is to transport natural gas from Marcellus and Utica Shale to liquefied natural gas ports in Maine and the Canadian Maritimes for export. The Department of Energy has commissioned two studies by the Energy Information Administration that both show, under every scenario analyzed, that domestic prices rise if natural gas is exported.

As domestic prices for natural gas prices rise, electricity generation plants which use natural gas now will shift back to coal. Similarly, residential and business customers will cut back on their usage of natural gas.

The cost of the pipeline will be underwritten by tariffs on residential and business energy bills. We pay for the pipeline, while Kinder Morgan makes the profits.

Tourism: Tourism in southwestern New Hampshire is generally focused on outdoor activities, including hiking, running, skiing and boating.

Environment

Conserved land: This project would potentially use eminent domain to take more than three dozen parcels of conserved land that have taken the state, towns, conservation organizations and citizens nearly 100 years to protect. Federal and state agencies funded many of these projects. In Rhododendron State Forest alone, approximately 2 miles of pipeline would be constructed.

Conserved land provides habitat for wildlife, areas for carbon sequestration, farmlands for locally grown crops and recreational opportunities. Kinder Morgan's taking of this land will not only have a profound effect on the community.

Wetlands: Four-hundred acres of wetlands, and 70 streams and ponds will be crossed by this project. In some cases the plan is to drill under the water body, however, in most cases the area would be trenched and the pipe set in the "protected" area contrary to both state and local law. Leaks in these areas would send toxins directly into local water supplies.

Noise pollution: The compressor slated for New Ipswich would destroy the tranquility enjoyed by residents whose property is in proximity to this facility. The mountainous terrain surrounding the compressor site means that many residences will have line of sight to the facility, thus exacerbating the noise and light pollution problems. The ability to walk in the woods with only the sounds of the wind and animals would be eliminated forever.

Vibration: Throughout our region, bedrock is very close to the surface. This allows the vibration from the compressor motors to travel great distances and cause health problems for residents, as well as jeopardize the integrity of the structures themselves.

Farms: Twenty-eight miles of the pipeline go through farm soils. There are many farms that are in close proximity to the compressor station which provide the local community, and even the Boston market, with fresh produce, milk, cheese and meat.

The nitrous oxide released regularly by the compressor station alone is estimated to reduce crop production by 30 percent. And who would want to consume products known to have been subject to air and water polluted by toxins and known/suspected carcinogens? These farms would be out of business.

Habitat: We are fortunate to have many species of wildlife throughout southwestern New Hampshire. Frequently seen are moose, bear, deer, fox and bobcat. Twenty-four miles of the pipeline will go through New Hampshire's "highest ranked" wildlife habitat as determined by the State's Wildlife Action Plan.

Flyway: The most important raptor flyway in the Northeast is the ridgeline running from Pack Monadnock south through Peterborough, Temple, Sharon and New Ipswich. This phenomenon is the subject of an annual study by N.H. Audubon, which has documented for many years the thousands of eagles, hawks and other raptors that use this natural feature each fall. The heat, light, noise and air pollution emanating from the compressor station will disrupt this event.

Need

Conflict of interest: To receive a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission permit, and thereby be allowed to take hundreds of New Hampshire properties by eminent domain and avoid EPA clean air regulations, Kinder Morgan must show some domestic need for at least some of the gas that the pipeline would deliver.

There are currently four gas distribution companies in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that are applying to their respective regulatory agencies for permission to buy gas from this pipeline. In its application to the N.H. Public Utilities Commission, Liberty Utilities projected their need out 20 years and assumed that they would dramatically expand their distribution network into many small towns.

Even with that, the new gas they are proposing to buy is only 3.85 percent of the gas from this pipeline. During the PUC hearings, it was disclosed that Liberty's parent company has a \$400 million investment in this pipeline and thus an ulterior motive to contract for this gas. Even if all four of these purchases were approved, they would account for only a small fraction of the billions of cubic feet a day that this pipeline would transport.

Electrical generation: No electrical generation plants have contracted for any of the gas that would be supplied by this pipeline. New Hampshire already exports roughly half of the electricity generated here. If Northern Pass were built, there would be even more excess electricity in our state.

Alternatives: If we assume a need for more natural gas in New England, there are three alternatives to this project, which would have far less impact on the environment and residents of New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The first two are existing pipelines that, with some modification, could supply the gas; they are Portland Natural Gas and Spectra Energy. The third alternative, which several gas distribution companies in Massachusetts have contracts with is LNG brought in by ship during the peak winter demand season.

FERC process

Citizens of New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire affected by this application have repeatedly expressed shock over the FERC process. Can this be constitutional? How can the government take our property when there is no public benefit? How can we be required to submit comments before the application is close to complete? Why is it that FERC, by their own admission, has only turned one application down? Why aren't natural gas pipelines subject to all EPA standards, particularly clean air? Why is it that FERC staff explicitly downplays the negative effects of proposed projects with statements that contradict the government's own studies?

The powers given to FERC by the 1938 Natural Gas Act need to be revisited by Congress.

Conclusion:

Despite Kinder Morgan's best efforts to convince us otherwise, this project would have no benefits for New Hampshire.

It would allow the company to transport enormous volumes of natural gas from Pennsylvania to Dracut, Massachusetts, for export and reap the profits. We would pay the environmental, economic and human health consequences.

We are fortunate that Sens. Ayotte and Shaheen and Congresswoman Kuster have taken a personal interest in this project, and have opened a dialogue with FERC, Kinder Morgan and even the Inspector General on our behalf. Their continued support will be crucial to protecting our region.

Gov. Hassan is walking a fine line between, listening to her constituents' concerns, hoping that "If we bring more energy into New Hampshire, it might lower our energy costs" and letting the federal and state processes run their course.

Governor, it's time to take a stand for New Hampshire.

This is not the time for niceties.

The deadline for comments to FERC is Oct. 16. A single "No" letter would be very important. A thousand new "No" letters from the Peterborough area would send a message to FERC that this project is bad for New Hampshire.

John Kieley is a resident of Temple, a member of Temple's Adhoc Pipeline Advisory Committee and one of Temple's representatives to the Municipal Pipeline Coalition.