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Press Release

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Hedlund criticizes state regulators for Spectra environmental review decision

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund voiced his disappointment with the decision yesterday by state environmental officials to refuse to require natural gas pipeline companies with construction plans in Weymouth to disclose all the environmental effects of both projects. A combined environmental impact report would have reviewed the effects of two natural gas pipeline expansion projects planned in Weymouth.

"First FERC and now MEPA have both avoided fully understanding all the consequences of the natural gas company's expansion plans in Weymouth," **said Mayor Hedlund**. "Each environmental regulator that has reviewed these projects to date has done so with narrow blinders limiting the full scope and the opportunity to review what Spectra is planning to do in Weymouth."

Spectra Energy proposes two pipeline projects that would affect Weymouth. Spectra's Atlantic Bridge project would propose, among other things, construction of a new natural gas compressor station in North Weymouth for Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC and Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline, LLC. For Eversource Energy & National Grid, Spectra's Access Northeast project would propose, among other things, construction in Weymouth of miles of the largest gas pipelines in Massachusetts.

Access Northeast would also more than double the capacity of the proposed North Weymouth compressor station that Spectra would build in 2017. Atlantic Bridge proposes to construct a 7,700 horsepower compressor station. Access Northeast would

expand in 2018 the station Atlantic Bridge would build and add another 10,320 horsepower compressor.

Each project needs numerous state and local permits since these pipeline projects affect public health, public safety, and environmental resources, such as wetlands, waterways, clean air, and public land. Environmental laws order developers of large projects to consider the environmental consequences of the projects, then minimize and mitigate any damage to the environment their projects would cause.

"FERC should be doing their job in protecting the health and safety of everyone. Their decisions to date, however, have proved to us that these environmental regulators enable instead of police projects before them," **said Mayor Hedlund.**

"I was hopeful the state, and especially MEPA, would be able to do what the feds have refused to do so far. Secretary Beaton's letter yesterday, however, disappointed me. He seems like he wants to avoid the issue in the same way as the five FERC commissioners President Obama appointed," **Mayor Hedlund added.**

Mayor Hedlund vowed not to give up opposition, however. "We continue to lobby other environmental agencies under Secretary Beaton's control. DEP still is considering a Chapter 91 waterways permit, an air quality permit, and an appeal of our conservation commission's denial of a wetlands permit. The state's Coastal Zone Management Office is considering whether these natural gas expansion projects are 'consistent' with federal and state policies to protect the coast and working waterfront. I remain hopeful that at least one environmental regulator will understand our concerns and admit the damage these projects could do," **stated Mayor Hedlund.**

Coastal Zone Management Office's federal consistency review considers whether these projects comply with both state and federal policies, procedures, regulations, and law designed to protect the public resources on the waterfront. "While FERC's certificate may supersede local and state permits, even FERC understands that CZM's federal consistency review is necessary. Without a positive decision from CZM that these projects comply with state and federal coastal protection laws, the compressor station cannot be built," **Mayor Hedlund said.**

"Even the state's top environmental regulator is unwilling to understand fully and completely what the people of Weymouth understand perfectly. The natural gas companies seek to hide from the public a broad review and understanding by breaking up these two large projects into smaller pieces. We are being left to wonder what will happen to Weymouth because of the natural gas company's expansion plans," **concluded Mayor Hedlund.**

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