

Update regarding Kinder Morgan Pipeline 6/30/2014

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to attend several meetings and forums relative to the pipeline in the various communities of the First Middlesex District.

Following some of these meetings, I sent an email request to my legislative colleagues, who would also be affected by the proposed northeast expansion of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline, to join with me in requesting support from members of our federal legislative delegation, as well as our own State government officials, in our efforts to address the vast issues associated with the pipeline.

In response to my request, I received a further request by Representative Stephen Kulik of Worthington, Massachusetts to come to a meeting to strategize as to how we could work best together. He explained that Representatives in the western part of the State have been collaborating already with regard to the pipeline and he suggested we “join forces.”

I also set up a meeting with Congresswoman Nikki Tsongas on June 6, 2014 at her Lowell office. She invited two members of her staff to work on clarifying the process so that we could get a better understanding of what actions might be taken to slow the process and allow citizens to have their voices heard on the pipeline. I later received some very valuable information from one of her assistant as to the process and I continue to be in communication with her office, as well as with Senator Eileen Donoghue.

On June 24, 2014, I met with three representatives from Kinder Morgan in Groton. As we discussed the various issues with the proposed pipeline, I reiterated the suggestion that they co-locate the pipeline along existing rights of way associated with the Mass Pike or Route 2. They said that they would be very interested in the prospect of accessing these existing corridors or rights of way but normally did not get favorable consideration from States with regard to use of their land. I then suggested that I would be meeting with my fellow legislators affected by the proposed pipeline and I would gage their support for a proposal to join together in asking our Department of Transportation to afford access to their existing rights of way to the extent possible to mitigate the effect on the environment and our communities.

They seemed very enthused about the possibilities, but cautioned that the Mass Pike would present a much more difficult process, as it would require federal authorization as well. Thus, we took out a map and turned our attention more closely to the possibility of the Route 2 corridor. They noted that Route 2 began in the western part of the State a little further north than they were planning, and that it did closely abut some residential parcels out in the western part of the Route. However, they did not seem to feel that either issue posed a decisive block to the possibility of re routing the pipeline to that corridor. They did like the fact that it came up to 495, which afforded them the access they needed to get to Dracut. Obviously, if the State was amenable to affording access to their Rights of Way, it would likely entail access to more rights of way than just those that abutted Route 2.

The following day, June 25, 2014, I met with a caucus of affected legislators at the State House. I received a lot of support for the proposal and I was tasked with writing a letter to the Department of Transportation with a request from the legislators to consider giving access over their existing rights of way. After I complete this proposed letter, and my fellow legislators have approved it, we will seek signature support from as many members of the legislature as possible.

Later that afternoon I received a call from one of the representatives I met with from Kinder Morgan asking how the proposal was received by the legislators. I advised him that they fully supported the proposal and that we would be asking DOT to look into making access over existing rights of way available to Kinder Morgan. This would not only alleviate the negative impact to our communities and our conservation land, but it would possible provide much needed revenue to our Department of Transportation. the Kinder Morgan represented to me that they were very enthusiastic about the proposal and that they would be meeting with the Department of Transportation the following day. I asked him to let the DOT representatives know that they would soon be receiving something from legislators asking for their cooperation.

I will continue to try to update you as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Sheila C. Harrington

State Representative-1st Middlesex District