

United States Senate

September 18, 2020

Al Monaco
President and Chief Executive Officer
Enbridge, Inc.
200, Fifth Avenue Place
425 1st Street SW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2P 3L8

Dear Mr. Monaco,

We write to urge Enbridge to halt its activities at the compressor station in Weymouth, Massachusetts, as you investigate the station's safety following an equipment failure and emergency shutdown. We are deeply troubled by Enbridge's September 16, 2020 letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requesting that the Commission grant its subsidiary, Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC, authorization to place the Weymouth compressor station into service so that it can commence operations by October 1, 2020.¹ This request comes less than a week after a gasket failure at the compressor station caused an unplanned gas release that led site employees to trigger an emergency shutdown. In light of the recent accident and concerns about the station's safety, we urge Enbridge to immediately suspend its operations at the Weymouth compression station and conduct a thorough review of the natural gas leak.

According to Enbridge's letter to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), the Weymouth compressor station experienced a gasket failure on a sump tank during commissioning activities on September 11, 2020.² As described in the letter, "line pressure gas was venting to atmosphere at ground level," releasing approximately 265,000 standard cubic feet of natural gas and 35 pounds of volatile organic compounds.³ This accidental gas leak led on-site employees to trigger the emergency shutdown system.

The recent unplanned gas release has given additional credence to the existing concerns about operationalizing the Weymouth compressor station. The quantity of natural gas released was equivalent to the average daily natural gas consumption of nearly 1,500 Massachusetts homes.⁴ Concerns have been raised that this amount of gas, vented at ground level, could have possibly

¹ Request to Place facilities In-service from Chris Harvey, Dir. Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC, to Kimberly D. Bose, Sec'y of FERC, Sept. 16, 2020. <https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filedownload?fileid=15624447>

² *Id.*

³ Barbara Moran and Miriam Wasser, *Critics Call For Shutdown, Safety Review Of Weymouth Compressor After Emergency Shutdown*, WBUR (Sept. 16, 2020), <https://www.wbur.org/earthwhile/2020/09/16/weymouth-compressor-shutdown-health-impact-assessment-safety>.

⁴ Congressional Research Service, *Email to Office of U.S. Senator Markey* (September 17, 2020)


been ignited by a spark from a passing vehicle and caused a fire or an explosion.⁵ This incident clearly demonstrates that we must do more to understand the dangers that the Weymouth compressor station poses to public health and safety.

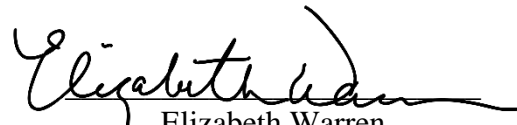
Instead of rushing to operationalize the Weymouth compression station by October 1, 2020, Enbridge should prioritize the health and safety of its workers and the Fore River community. Weymouth is a densely populated coastal area with an estimated 3,100 people per square mile, and the location of the compressor station is within 1.5 miles of schools with more than 3,000 students enrolled.⁶ The safety of compression station workers and the people of Fore River neighborhoods should be of paramount concern.

Additionally, putting the Weymouth compressor station into immediate operation would be premature as MassDEP is working to complete its court-ordered reassessment of its Best Available Control Technology (BACT) analysis.⁷ Should MassDEP determine that the electric motor turbine is the best available control technology, rather than the originally approved natural gas-fired turbine, Enbridge would need to overhaul its project. It would seem prudent for Enbridge to hold off on operationalizing a project that could very well be forced to shut down in the coming months, especially as immediate safety concerns persist.

Thank you for your attention to these requests, and we look forward to your prompt reply. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Senator Markey's office at 202-224-2742.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

⁵ Marie Szaniszló, *Opponents slam Weymouth natural gas compressor station after leak*, Boston Herald (Sept. 12, 2020), <https://www.bostonherald.com/2020/09/12/opponents-slam-weymouth-natural-gas-compressor-station-for-leak/>.

⁶ Miriam Wasser, *Confused About The Weymouth Compressor? Here's What You Need To Know*, WBUR (Dec. 2, 2019), <https://www.wbur.org/earthwhile/2019/06/19/proposed-weymouth-gas-compressor-explained>.

⁷ Barbara Moran, *Court Vacates Weymouth Compressor Air Permit*, WBUR (June 3, 2020), <https://www.wbur.org/earthwhile/2020/06/03/court-vacates-weymouth-compressor-air-permit>.