



Hinesburg Selectboard  
Town of Hinesburg  
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802.482.2281

Steve Wark  
Director of Communications  
Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.  
PO Box 467 Burlington, VT. 05402-0467

December 10, 2012

**Re: Addison Natural Gas Project – 45 Day Advance Notice of Proposed Project**

Dear Mr. Wark,

Vermont Gas Systems' Addison Natural Gas Project, as currently proposed, involves impacts to the Town of Hinesburg and has therefore piqued the interest and emotions of our residents and the members of Hinesburg's Selectboard. This Selectboard supports the project in broad terms, has a clear understanding of the goals of transmission project, and believes that expanding natural gas is part of a sensible long-term energy plan for Vermont and the United States. However, it is our responsibility to safeguard the interests of this community and ensure that the voices of our constituents are heard as this project marches forward. The purpose of this letter is to clearly articulate the concerns held by this board and our citizenry to you and the Public Service Board during the 45 day advanced notice period so that the Town of Hinesburg, Vermont Gas, and the Public Service Board can engage in open and honest dialogue. We believe this will result in the best outcome for all involved parties.

Most of our concerns revolve around the lack of information received to date, poor communication, and potential lasting adverse harm to the Town of Hinesburg as a result of this project. In no specific order or priority our concerns are as follows:

1. We feel Vermont Gas was grossly negligent in your initial survey work in Hinesburg. Citizens complained that subcontractors entered on private and posted property without owner permission. This is unacceptable and obviously puts everyone on the defensive. We did not hear a clear apology or a plan by Vermont Gas to take corrective actions to prevent a recurrence. It would be helpful to this process if Vermont Gas would issue a formal apology and explain how this mistake will not be repeated.
2. Your public presentation at the November 12, 2012 Hinesburg Selectboard meeting lacked detail on the pipeline route through Hinesburg. This is also true with the plans that accompanied your recent 45-day notice. The actual track of the pipeline is the Town's highest concern. Unfortunately there is little detail and significant contradictions with the information provided to date. For example:

- It is unclear why the gas line cannot be located within the existing VELCO right of way. You stated that Vermont Gas (ideally) requires a 75' wide path to install the pipeline, but you also stated that much less would be required on a road ROW alignment.
  - You stated that it would be difficult to negotiate the ROW with VELCO. A meeting attendee pointed out that both VELCO and Vermont Gas are owned by the same parent company. He asked you to demonstrate a sincere effort to break this perceived bottleneck or explain why the two companies can't work together for this common cause. The Selectboard would like to understand why this option is considered a difficult sell to VELCO.
  - The 45-day advance notice, dated November 5, 2012, to the town of Hinesburg, specifically describes the route of the pipeline as running parallel to VELCO lines from Williston to Middlebury. Your presentation to the town of Hinesburg clearly showed the route straying off the VELCO line and following Baldwin Road in or beside the town road ROW. This is a significant issue for Hinesburg and we expect to be provided with an accurate representation of your intentions in order to respond to the PSB.
  - The Selectboard is unanimous in the opinion that Baldwin Road is not a desirable path for this project due to the close proximity of homes, the historic tree lines and limited existing ROW clearance. Our citizens are rightfully fearful of a natural Gas transmission pipeline just a few yards from their homes. Recent natural gas explosions in the news make those concerns legitimate. The presentation also expressed a strong desire to stay away from tree growth for the long-term safety of the pipeline. This is an indication to us that your route along Baldwin Road would require significant removal of many roadside trees including 100+ year old trees which is unacceptable. Again, this is another point of confusion on why you would not follow the VELCO line. The VELCO line is already free of trees and maintained cleared of all growth. Location on the VELCO ROW would also eliminate the alarm of Hinesburg property owners (including the Town) over likely property restrictions arising from a gas line ROW passing near homes and along the roadway.
3. You are aware that the Selectboard has requested that Vermont Gas investigate expanding service to a high density neighborhood off of Richmond Road in Hinesburg. It is a priority of ours to deliver natural gas service to this community and want to make sure efforts on this investigation have a high priority. It is especially timely because it demonstrates to towns south of Hinesburg that expanding the gas distribution line will be an economic benefit to their residents and businesses. When asked about this investigation you were unable to provide much detail other than say more study is scheduled for the spring. The Selectboard would like to be better informed on the progress of this project. Please provide contact information for the Project Manager who is ultimately responsible for this

study and whom we might communicate to directly? We want to be fully informed on progress of this project.

Again, we support Vermont Gas's desire to expand service to our Vermont neighbors and businesses but we want this process to be collaborative and respectful to this community. Please consider this letter as our first expression of our concerns and as the start of a dialog that will yield more specific information about the Addison Natural Gas Project as it relates to the Town of Hinesburg.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Trefry,  
Chair

Phil Pouech

Andrea Morgante

Michael Bissonette

Tom Ayer