

Jan. 1, 2013

Selectboard File

Letter to the Editor,

In addition to the Letter in the Dec. 20th Addison Independent concerning the proposed natural gas pipeline, please google or yahoo natural gas pipeline explosions, and pictures of natural gas pipeline explosions.

It appears from news reports and the New Haven presentation, that the promoters are saying that they have developed safe pipeline technology and there is no danger.

That sounds like a deceptive sales pitch, since it is not possible to guarantee that there will never be a leak of high pressure, high volume gas, or an "accident".

It is worthy of note that the gas pipeline proposal includes a pumping station near the Bridge School, and main gas transmission pipeline through Middlebury south to Rutland.

Do we want to allow risking the lives of children and other Vermonters as a human sacrifice for one source of fuel? Our Town Attorneys and existing Vermont law can prevent that.

The Selectboard of every Town along the proposed natural gas pipeline has an interest / responsibility (public health and safety) in the Public Service Board procedure to determine if the proposal should, or should not be given a Certificate of Public Good.

The Town Attorney for each Town represents the will of the Selectboard as a party in the proceedings before the Public Service Board, much like the legal proceedings of a Court.

Vermont law, Title 30, Section 248(b)(5) is clear that if a proposal would have "an undue adverse effect on public health and safety" it should not be given a Certificate of Public Good.

The Selectboard of every Town along the proposed gas pipeline can instruct their Town Attorney to present to the Public Service Board the fact that the proposed natural gas pipeline is a danger to public health and safety, and so the Public Service Board is required by Vermont law to not approve the proposal (Vt. Const., Ch. 1, Art. 4). The rule of law of, by, and for the people.

John Madden  
John Madden  
Hunt Road  
New Haven, Vermont

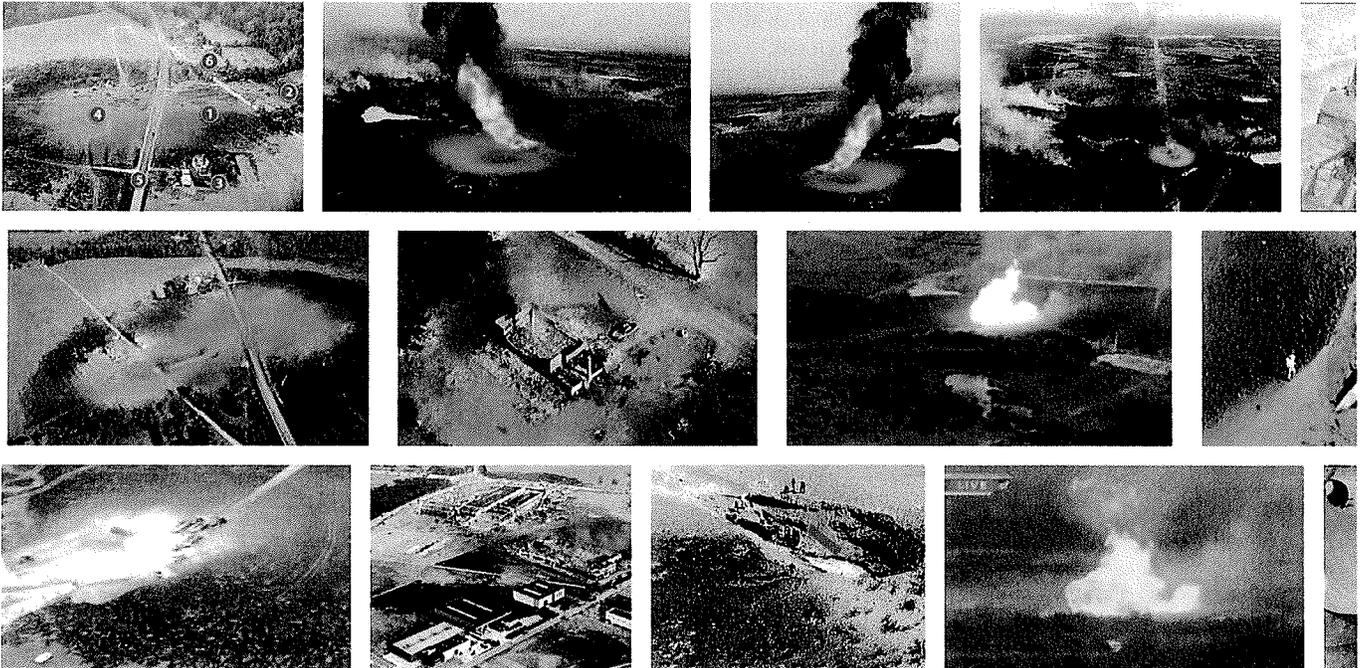
T30 § 248

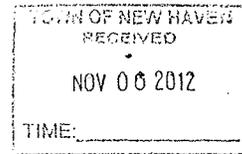
PUBLIC SERVICE

Ch. 5

(b) Before the public service board issues a certificate of public good as required under subsection (a) of this section, it shall find that the purchase, investment or construction:

(5) with respect to an in-state facility, will not have an undue adverse effect on esthetics, historic sites, air and water purity, the natural environment, the use of natural resources, and the public health and safety, with due consideration having been given to the criteria specified in 10 V.S.A. §§ 1424a(d) and 6086(a)(1) through (8) and (9)(K) and greenhouse gas impacts;





(Owned by Canada Gaz Metro)

November 5, 2012

To those Planning Commissions and Selectboards named on the attached Appendix A

Re: Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.  
Addison Natural Gas Project – Section 248 Permit Process  
45-Day Advance Notice of Proposed Project

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

In response to recent requests from community leaders and a number of Addison and Rutland County businesses, and consistent with the State's energy policy, Vermont Gas is planning to expand natural gas service into Addison. The Addison Natural Gas Project will involve the extension of the Company's existing transmission system further south to Middlebury, the construction of three gate stations to step the pressure down, and the construction of distribution feeder mains to Vergennes and Middlebury. The purpose of this letter is to notify you, in accordance with Section 248 of Title 30, Vermont Statutes Annotated ("Section 248"), that Vermont Gas anticipates filing its petition in mid-December of 2012 with the Public Service Board ("PSB"), and is providing the information in this 45-day advance notice package to the municipal and regional planning commissions and municipal legislative bodies in accordance with PSB Rule 5.402. This letter describes the Project, the expected Project filing date with the PSB, and the rights of the local and regional planning commissions to comment on the Project plans and participate in the PSB Section 248 process.

## Natural gas not a 'bridge' solution

On Tuesday, Dec. 11, I attended the Middlebury selectboard meeting, which included comments about a gas pipeline from Canada through Vermont. One of the points made in support was that we need it for our economy, that if we don't provide inexpensive power, companies will not move here. What about the businesses that will stay away because of the pipeline — the people and businesses who won't come here because they were attracted to Vermont because of its values? This pipeline flies in the face of those values by supporting non-renewable fossil fuels, increasing dependency on a resource which has to be transported over long distances, using a vendor who is extracting gas by environmentally destructive fracking, adding to its reliance on far-distant mega-companies instead of developing local resources, choosing "least worst" options rather than innovating, and being ecologically reckless concerning sensitive terrain through which the pipeline will be dug.

How about the companies that won't come here because they will see that while Vermont talks "green" and local, when it comes to where its money goes, it makes opposite choices, it's deceptive. What about businesses that will say,

"Vermont's buying into physically dangerous, ecologically harmful technology which is going to be obsolete in 50 years. Sounds like my kind of place!"

Selectboard members in support also said, "It's the best of the available choices." We are not compelled to choose now. The ramifications of this choice are going to last for many years and affect future generations. Doing nothing for the moment, accepting none of the available choices, is also a realistic choice.

The risk to having a pipeline is a risk not only to us but to our children and grandchildren. There is a risk to our wildlife, there is a risk to the quality of our air, there is a risk to so many things we cherish. One mistake — one death — makes this an unacceptable risk because it is not necessary. I ask that you weigh the value of what the pipeline might bring with the possibility of what it might take away. Yes, I agree that we probably now know enough to prevent what caused the last explosion on pipeline, but that doesn't mean we know enough to prevent what will cause the next explosion. This is a rare chance to have hindsight — ahead of time.

There are other ways to get our energy needs met. There are solutions if we can stop looking at things only from the standpoint of "large," of trying to find a way to supply thousands of homes and

businesses from a single source of energy. For example, a possible "bridge" solution might be if the gas company used the same amount of money it was going to spend on the pipeline instead to help people upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes and businesses and to make more use of current renew-

(See Letter, Page 5A)

(Continued from Page 4A)

able energy options. This can reduce power bills by a significant amount. Plus there would be no worry about explosions killing people, fires wiping out homes and businesses, and ecological disasters. We would not have to worry about frost heaves, wildlife corridors, wetlands or unthinkable weather, none of that would be a problem. Short- and long-term solutions might be on a micro, rather than a macro, level.

Moreover, future generations will not have to deal with removal and cleanup of this massive pipeline's infrastructure. Perhaps they won't be thinking about us, shaking their hands and asking, "Why is it they made the same mistakes over and over again?"

Barbara Clearbridge  
Middlebury

Addison Independent

Thursday, December 20, 2012

High among the risks are pipelines laid as long ago as Harry Truman's presidency. Many of these high-pressure pipelines are 30 inches or more in diameter. A number have been granted safety-inspection waivers by the Department of Transportation, which lets some pipelines operate even when almost 70 percent of the pipe wall has corroded. The National Academy of Engineering warned about these dangers in a 2004 report.

Two years ago a natural-gas pipeline exploded, killing eight people and destroying 38 homes in the San Francisco suburb of San Bruno, Calif. Flames shot 200 feet into the evening sky while Pacific Gas & Electric workers crawled through rush-hour traffic for more than an hour before reaching shut-off valves (PG&E says it is making "fundamental changes" to improve pipeline safety). Among the dead: Jacqueline Greig, a California public-utilities-commission employee who was investigating the risks of pipeline explosions, unaware that for more than a half century a giant pipe with a faulty weld ran through what had been an open field before her home was built.

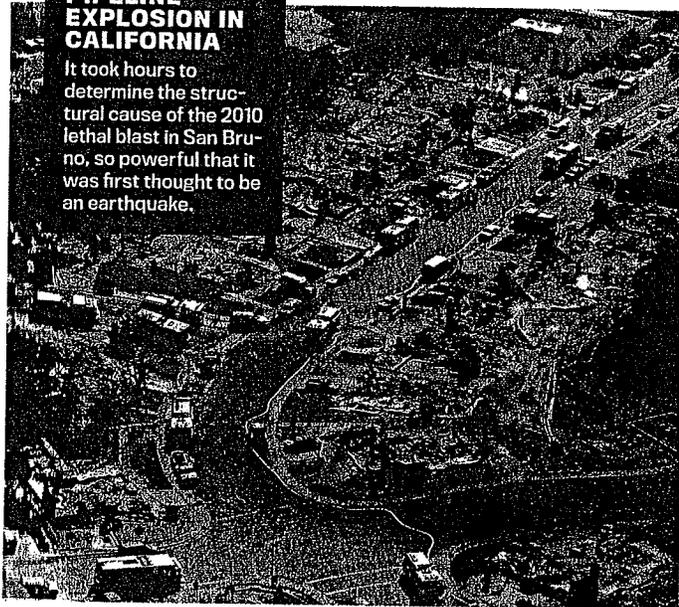
A decade earlier an explosion in the New Mexico desert awakened people 20 miles away. Firefighters from Carlsbad encountered a gigantic blowtorch fed by the main natural-gas pipeline serving Southern California. When El Paso Natural Gas shut off the flow of gas 55 minutes later, the fire's deafening roar was replaced by wailing. Rushing down to the Pecos River, firefighters found six survivors, horribly burned members of an extended family of 12. One begged to be shot. All soon died.

"The overarching problem with the current pipeline-safety regulatory system is the undue influence that the pipeline industry has on every aspect of how those regulations are designed and enforced," Weimer said. "The industry deluges rule-making processes with their public relations people and lawyers, and most regulators have either come from the industry they now regulate or plan to go to work for that industry once they leave government service."

As far back as 1978, the investigating arm of Congress, now called the Government Accountability Office, issued scathing reports about incompetence, weak rules, and ineffective enforcement by the Transportation Department's Office of Pipeline Safety. Even the American Petroleum Institute, which represents big oil companies, has criticized the pipeline-safety office over the poor quality of its accident records.

## PIPELINE EXPLOSION IN CALIFORNIA

It took hours to determine the structural cause of the 2010 lethal blast in San Bruno, so powerful that it was first thought to be an earthquake.



That law requires that residents be told if they live near a big pipeline—but the notices are just inserts in utility bills, which most people toss unread. One colorful six-page pamphlet sent to school principals states on its fifth page that "you are receiving this information because pipeline infrastructure is located near schools or facilities in your district." There is no information about where pipelines are located, what precautions are appropriate, or anything else that might help save lives. This utterly useless document comes from the Pipeline Association for Public Awareness, an industry group, with official approval from the federal Office of Pipeline Safety. This and similar pamphlets blandly warn about a "high consequence area." Words like "death," "blast," and "burn" do not appear.

The federal government has done no studies to see if these pamphlets are effective. But consider this: Mayor Jim Ruane of San Bruno, Calif., told me that until the 2010 explosion in his town, local fire and police officials did not even know the pipeline existed. Later, the mayor said, a second big pipeline came to the city's attention only because the city told Pacific Gas & Electric about plans to erect a building at a lot.

Pamphlets are only one of the ways the industry, with federal government help, understates risks.

A natural-gas industry study, adopted by the federal Department of Transportation,

estimated that an explosion of a 30-inch pipe, operating at 1,500 pounds of pressure per square inch of the pipeline wall, would be fatal up to 660 feet away. The El Paso Natural Gas pipeline in New Mexico operated at less than half that pressure, and the 12 people killed were 675 feet from the rupture.

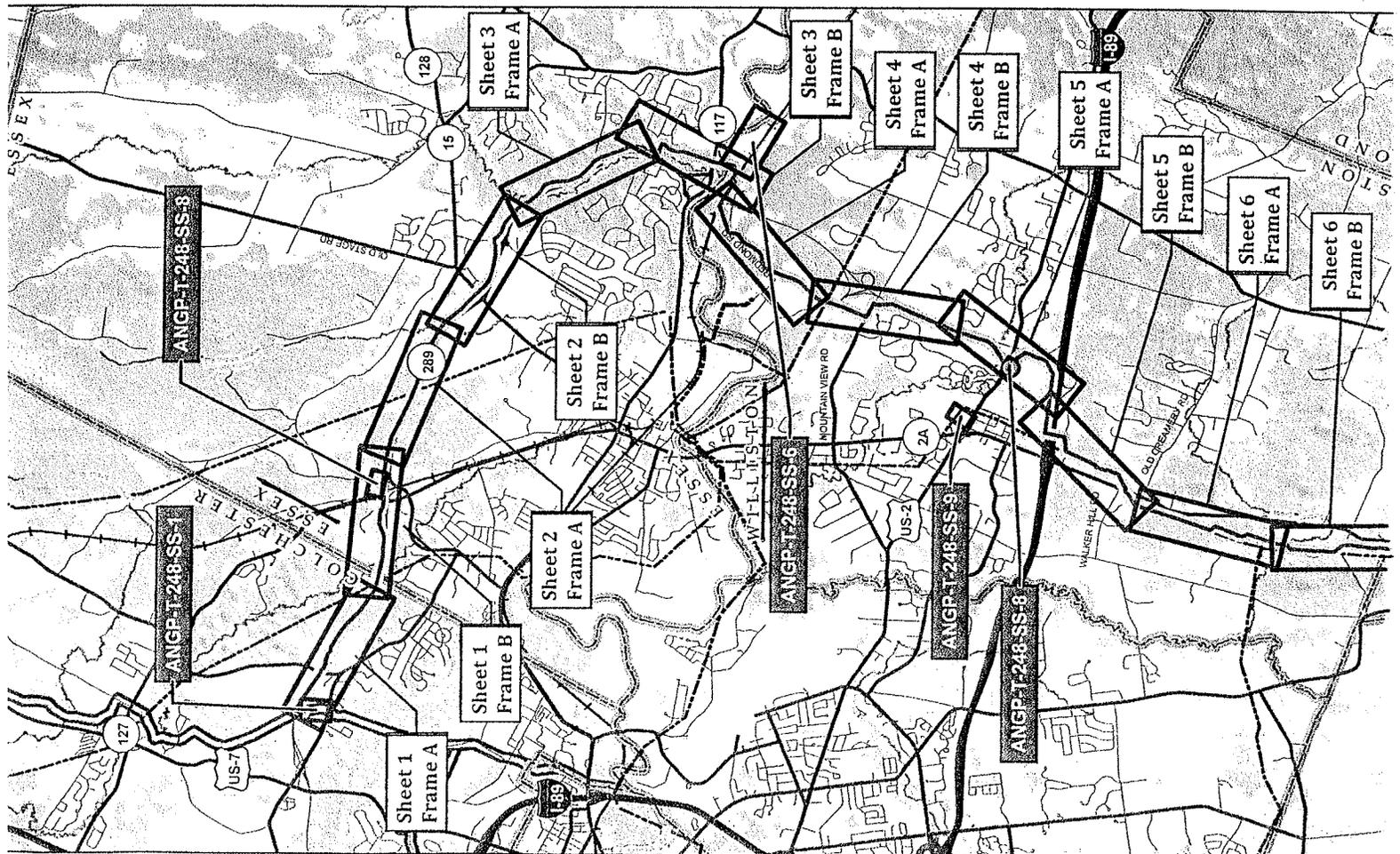
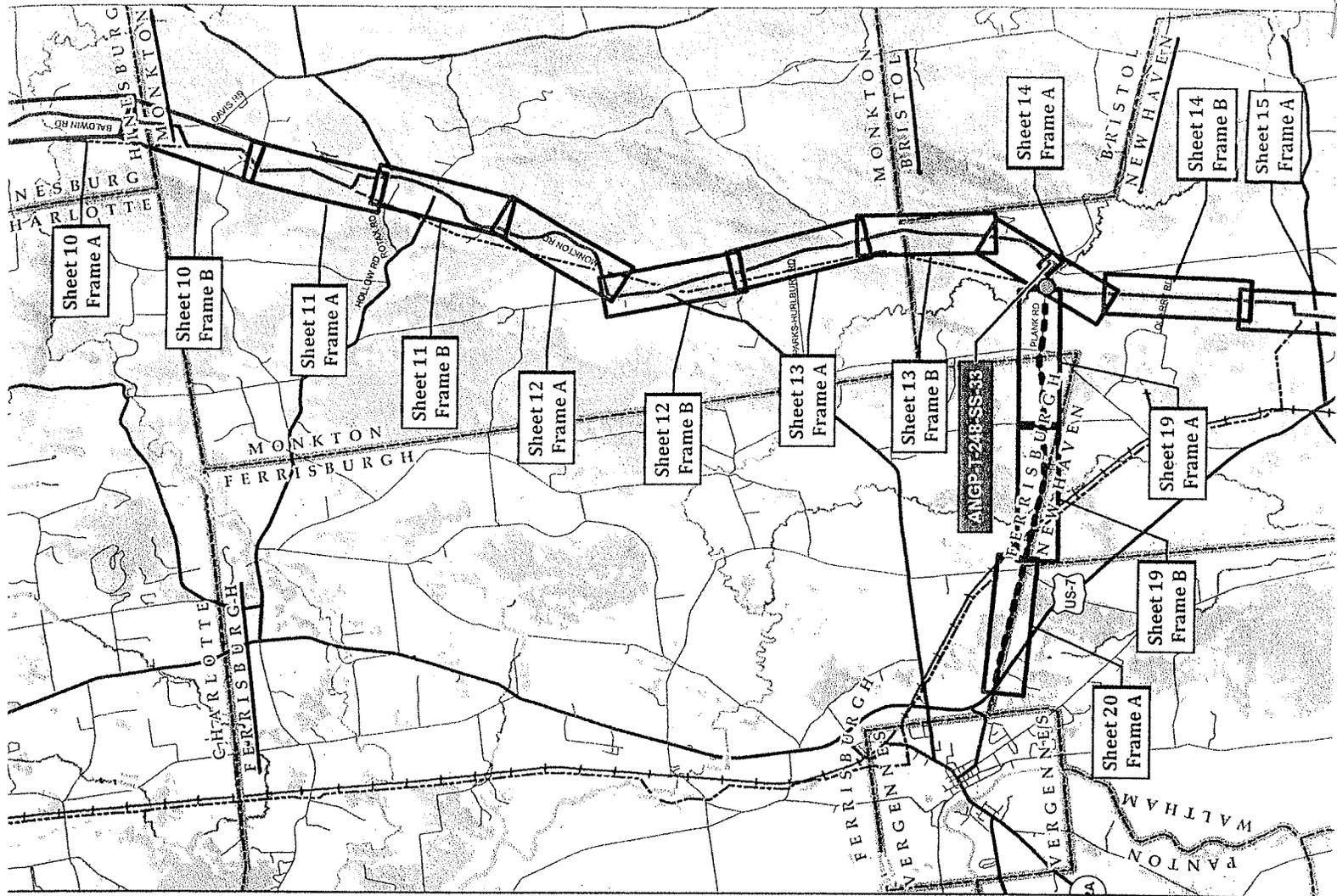
There's also this irony: utility prices are set by the government, which lets the companies include in their rates the cost of insurance to pay damages from, say, a pipeline explosion.

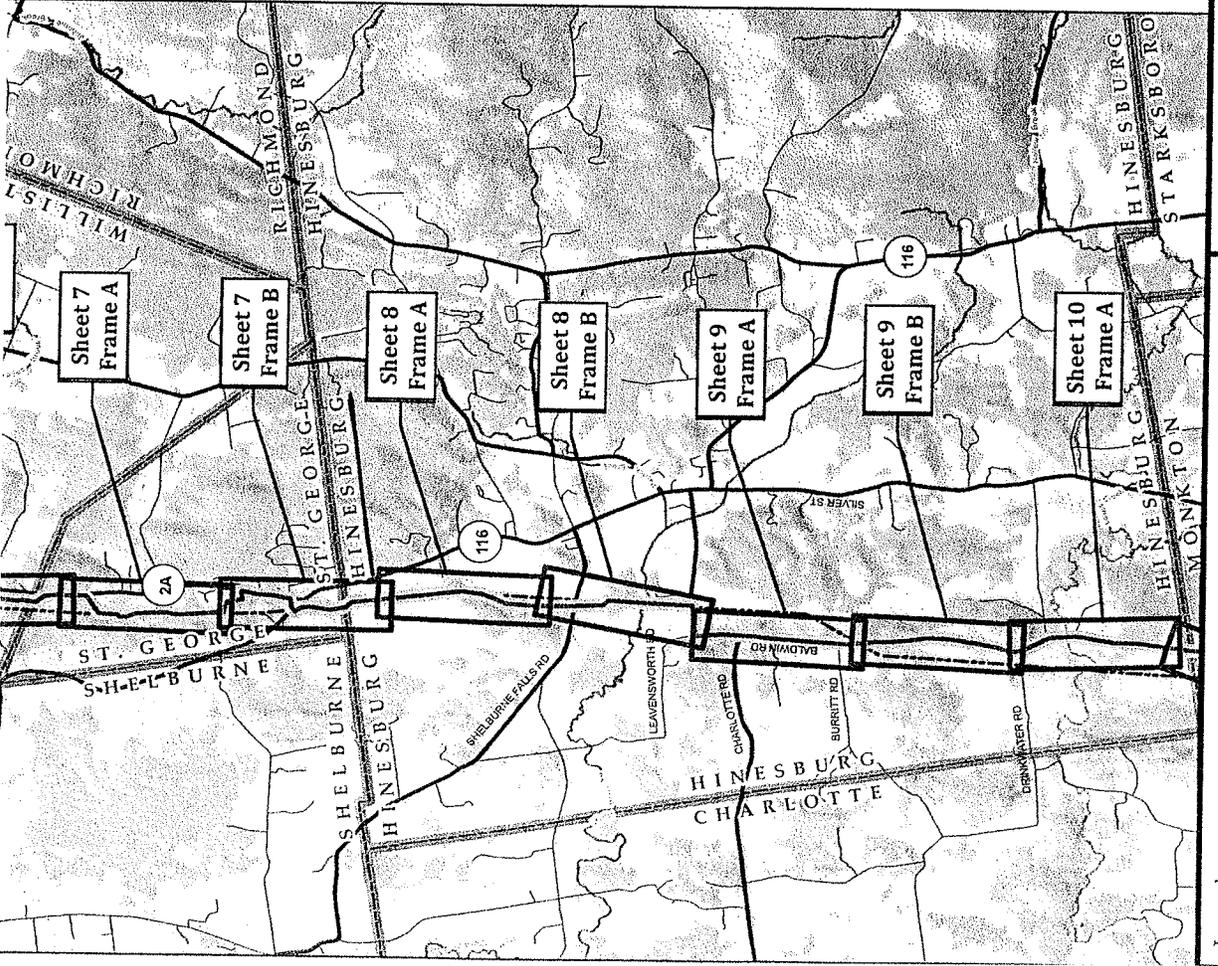
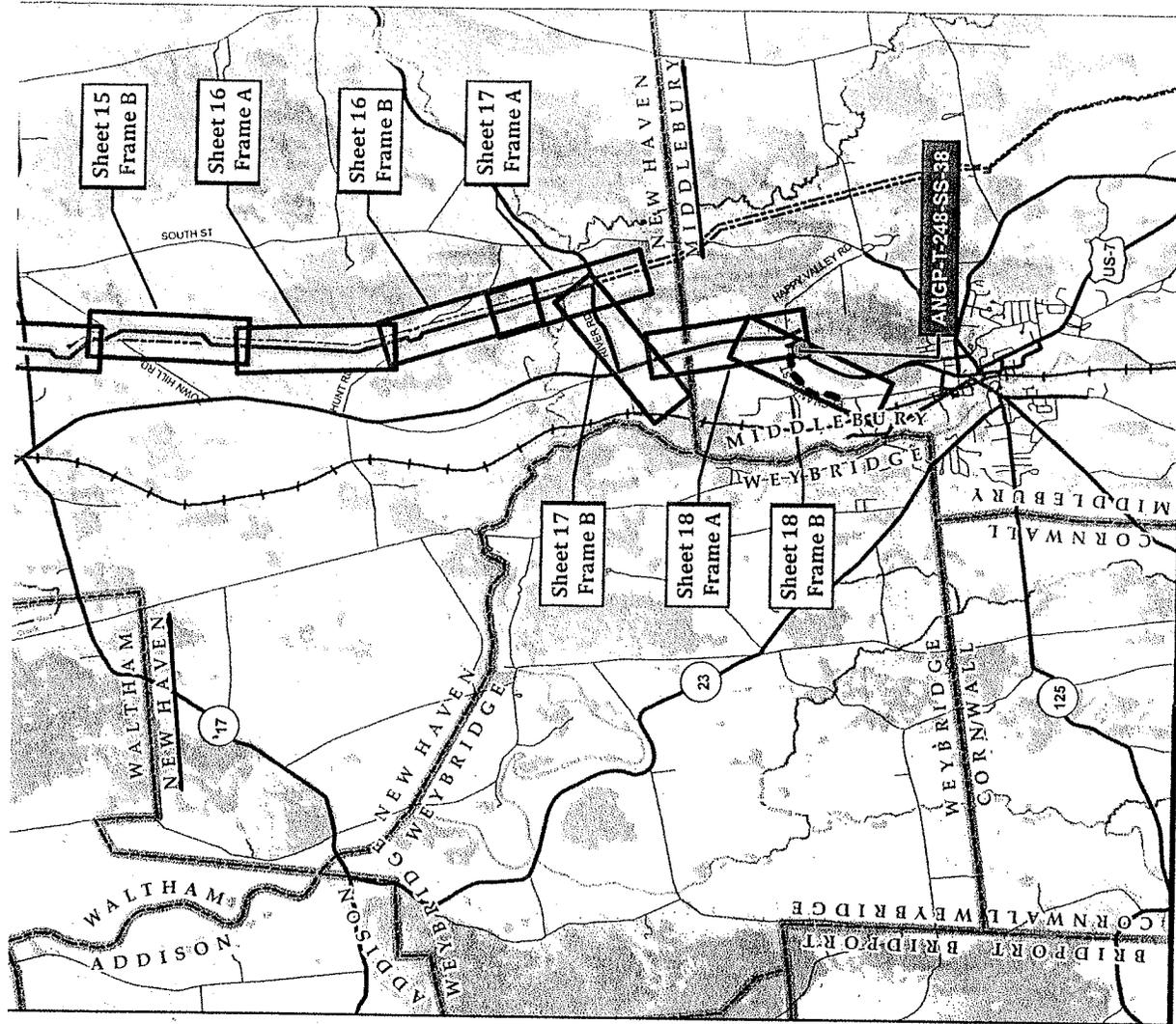
As legal monopolies, they get to add the higher insurance costs to the rates they charge. That means we are forced to pay more even as we are put in greater danger. **NW**

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NEWSWEEK

SEPTEMBER 10, 2012





**GLA**  
design/construction solutions

**COLER**  
**SOLANTONIO**  
INC. ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS PLANNERS

**VHB** Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Vermont Gas

**Vermont Gas**  
**Addison Natural Gas Project**  
**Chittenden and Addison**  
**Counties, VT**  
**Index - Issued for Section 248**  
**45 Day Advance Notice**

November 5, 2012

**Legend**

- Sheet Index
- Proposed Gate Station Location
- Proposed Transmission Mainline
- Proposed Distribution Mainline
- Existing Transmission Main (VT Gas)
- Electric Transmission Line
- Town Boundary
- Stream (VHD)
- Railroad

1 0.5 0 1 Miles

Questions re. proposed gas pipeline.

1. Are there detrimental environmental impacts of obtaining and burning natural gas ?

Ans. Yes, natural gas is a fossil fuel with "greenhouse gas" emissions.

2. Does a gas pipeline bring an increase in residential and commercial / industrial development ?

Ans. Yes, and an increase in individual property taxes to pay for increase in municipal services (for example Chittenden County).

3. Can Gaz Metro guarantee an ongoing supply and competitive cost of natural gas ?

Ans. Gaz Metro is a monopoly supplier with a captive market, and an out of State (Canadian) source of natural gas.

4. Can Gaz Metro guarantee that there will never be property damage or personal injury or fatality as the result of a pipeline leak of natural gas ?

Ans. No, natural gas can be explosive.

5. Is there a fuel that is renewable and can be produced in Vermont ?

Ans. Yes, canola plant oil is a fuel for diesel or heating use, and the production of it will be a contribution to sustaining Vermont agricultural and tourist industries (for example, along Rte 7 / Ethan Allen Hwy. and Rte 17 in New Haven), and creating sustainable jobs in Vermont.



A Townshend home was demolished by an explosion early Wednesday morning. CHIEF PHIL

TOWNSHEND — Vermont fire officials are trying to determine what caused an explosion that heavily damaged a Townshend home, with parts of the house found more than 200 feet away.

No one was home during the blast, reported at about 3 a.m. Wednesday. Fire officials arrived to find the house off its foundation.

Officials suspect a problem with a gas line. They do not consider the explosion suspicious.

Firefighters said the home is considered a total loss. A neighboring building, West Village Family Dental, was also damaged in the explosion. A structural analysis will be done before the office is reopened.



# Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating the Development of Vermont's Green Economy

## Vermont Bioenergy Initiative

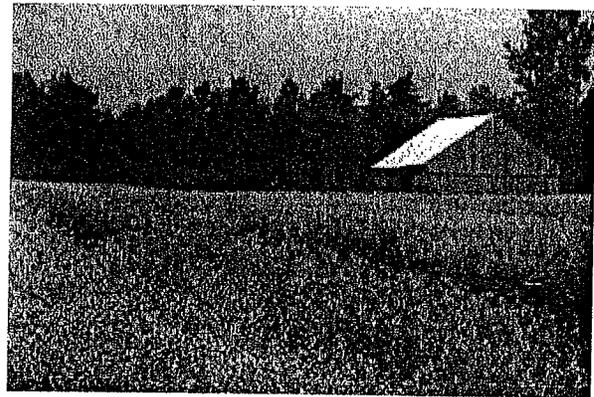
If you are interested in this please let me know. J.M.



### Bioenergy Initiative Overview & History

The VSJF has applied its market development model to build a lasting and sustainable bioenergy sector in Vermont. The Vermont Bioenergy Initiative (VBI) is a strategic approach to value-added agriculture; supplying farm energy inputs from local resources, since 2003.

[view project](#)



### Oilseeds & Biodiesel

The Vermont Bioenergy Initiative is helping farms and communities transition away from fossil fuels, become more self sufficient, and save money by growing and processing their own oil-rich seeds and beans to be used for fuel, livestock feed, and specialty oils.

[view project](#)

Vermont Strong  
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