

State House
Boston, MA 02133

November 2, 2015

Re: Article 97 Lands and Natural Gas Pipelines, H.3690

Dear Legislator,

Our 63 organizations are writing with great concern for our public conservation land in the face of the natural gas pipeline proposals in Massachusetts. As the third most densely populated state in the nation, Massachusetts has undertaken decades of careful planning and land conservation in order to protect and preserve our state's valuable landscape. Land conservation is supported by public trust and public policy, including Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution, for clean drinking water, wildlife and game habitat, outdoor recreation, farms and the food they bring, and that intangible and infinite capacity to inspire and connect us to something greater than ourselves. These efforts are built on significant public and private investments, including \$360 million of state dollars between 2007 and 2014 alone.

We are concerned that a private, out of state company now views these areas as convenient for the construction of energy infrastructure at an unprecedented scale, which will fragment and devalue the network of public and private conservation land that we, along with the Legislature, other conservation organizations, municipalities, and the Commonwealth, have worked for decades to protect.

Energy needs are changing, but there are alternatives. We can continue moving forward with smart and cost-effective energy policy without undoing decades of conservation efforts. Energy efficiency can be expanded, leaky pipes can be fixed, renewable energy can be deployed, and lower impact alternatives can be chosen.

The first of several anticipated Article 97 disposition bills related to natural gas pipelines has been filed and is currently before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. The bill will be heard on November 10th in Gardner Auditorium at 11 a.m. We are in strong **opposition** to **H.3690 An Act relative to the conveyance of an easement in the town of Sandisfield, Massachusetts** (Representative G. Bradley, D-Hingham), which would convey valuable conservation land to Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP), a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, for the purpose of constructing natural gas pipelines as part of the Connecticut Expansion Project (CEP). This project would not increase natural gas supply or address reliability concerns for Massachusetts residents as the gas is contracted to Connecticut utilities.

We oppose **H.3690** for the following reasons:

- This project is directly counter to the purposes for which the land was protected, and would result in permanent losses and degradation of protected open space. Further, there is no indication that land of equivalent natural or cultural characteristics is available for mitigation, making it impossible to meet the state's established goal of no-net loss of conservation land. The Open Space Institute has underscored the land's irreplaceable value: "Interior wooded areas such as this are known as 'core forests,' and only 45 of them are left between Maine and Virginia."
- This project would undermine a substantial taxpayer investment in an irreplaceable asset. In 2007, working with Mass Audubon, the Department of Conservation and Recreation purchased 904 acres known as Spectacle Pond Farm – a site identified in 1999 as one of the most significant land protection opportunities remaining in the state because of the acreage, variety of habitats, rare plant and animal species, historic mill sites, old growth forests, and river frontage.

Our collective organizations represent thousands of citizens across the Commonwealth. **We will monitor and oppose H.3690 and any other legislation related to conveyances of conservation land for pipeline construction if significant environmental conflicts or uncertainties exist within the scope of the proposed project; further Mass Audubon and ELM will include these votes in our scorecards and other analyses of the 2015-2016 legislative session.**

Public conservation land should not be used to underwrite private energy projects. We are also concerned about the long range negative impact on future land conservation if the intent of the public and of private donors is not upheld. The public trust must be upheld for current and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Karen Heymann, kheyman@massaudubon.org, Jen Ryan, jryan@thetrustees.org, or Nancy Goodman, ngoodman@environmentalleague.org, for additional information.

Sincerely,

Jen Ryan, Director of Policy
The Trustees

Mary Griffin, Executive Director
Mass Land Trust Coalition

Nancy Goodman,
Vice President for Policy, Environmental League of
Massachusetts

Karen Heymann, Legislative Director
Mass Audubon

Cris Coffin	New England Director	American Farmland Trust
Veronica Eady	Vice President and Director, CLF Massachusetts	Conservation Law Foundation
Kevin Essington	State Director	The Trust for Public Land
Eugene Benson	Executive Director	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions
Heather Clish	Director, Conservation and Recreation Policy	Appalachian Mountain Club
Edward Woll Jr.	Conservation Chair	Massachusetts Sierra Club
Kathryn R. Eiseman	Director	Massachusetts Pipeline Awareness Network
Sylvia Broude	Executive Director	Toxics Action Center Campaign
Joel Wool	Advocate: Energy and Environment	Clean Water Action
Jane Calvin	Executive Director	Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, Inc.
Wayne Castonguay	Executive Director	Ipswich River Watershed Association
Michael Green	Executive Director	Climate Action Business Association
Lance McKee		Tatnuck Brook Watershed Association
Kathy Orlando	Executive Director	Sheffield Land Trust
Jane Winn	Executive Director	Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
Alison Field-Juma	Executive Director	OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord Rivers
Ken & Ethel Kipen	Mr. & Mrs.	Hilltown Anti-Herbicide Coalition
Julie Crockford	President	Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Cynthia Henshaw	Executive Director	East Quabbin Land Trust
Audrey Schulman	President	HEET
Cindy Trahan-Liptak	President	Rutland Land Conservancy
Louis F. Andrews	President	Natural Resources Trust of Mansfield
Natasha Grigg	President	BTA/BOLT, INC.
Richard Hubbard	Executive Director	Franklin Land Trust, Inc.

Narain Schroeder	Director of Land Conservation	Berkshire Natural Resources Council
Ed DeWitt	Executive Director	Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC)
Janet Morrison	Executive Director	North County Land Trust
Ed Hood	Executive Director	Opacum Land Trust
Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell	Executive Director	Nashua River Watershed Association
Kristin DeBoer	Executive Director	Kestrel Land Trust
Rosemary Wessel	Founder	No Fracked Gas in Mass
Eleanor Tillinghast	President	Green Berkshires, Inc.
Leigh Youngblood	Executive Director	Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
Susan McCombe	Clerk	Wareham Land Trust
Patricia Reeser		West Newbury Open Space Committee
Deborah Katz	Executive Director	Citizens Awareness Network
Christopher Derby Kilfoyle	President	BPVS
Everett J. Castro	Advocacy Director	Green Futures
Judy Eddy	Co-Chair, Pipeline Opposition Working Group	350Mass Berkshires
Ivan Ussach	Director	Millers River Watershed Council
Robert Zimmermann	President	Broad Brook Coalition
Andrew Vernon	President	Greater Northfield Watershed Association
Karen Grey	President	Wildlands Trust
John Mason	Treasurer	Richmond Land Trust
Barbara Jacobson	Programs Director	Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition
Kelsey Wirth	Founder and Chair	Mothers Out Front
Marjorie Fisher	Secretary	Westborough Community Land Trust
Judy Lehrer Jacobs	Executive Director	Friends of the Blue Hills
Scott Shumway	President	Westborough Community Land Trust
Michael G. Dyer	President	Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust
Roni Beal	Co-Chair	Green-Rainbow Party
Gary Howland	Pres.	Ashburnham Conservation Trust
Wil Hastings	member	West Cummington Congregational Church
Kenneth Hartlage	President	Nashoba Conservation Trust
Sharl Heller	President	Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance, Inc
Edward Himlan	Executive Director	Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
Kurt Buermann	President	Sharon Friends of Conservation
Cora-Dorothy Peirce	President	Fairhaven Acushnet Land Preservation Trust
Dr. Flora Sadri		Board of Health