

While gas providers line up for their piece of the New England energy pie, policy makers ask us to divert our gaze from long-standing energy goals and embrace natural gas as our go-to fuel for heating, transportation, and electric power generation. Five New England gas projects (*AIM, Access Northeast, Northeast Expansion, Continent to Coast, aka. C2C, and Northeast Energy Direct, aka. NED*) sprouted from a brief, peak-demand constraint (winter 2013-2014), worry over electric-market price-spikes, and indecision on plans for our aging power plants. This set of common energy sector issues was spun into a 'crisis', just in time to meet the availability of Marcellus shale gas. Thus launched New England's NED-Time Story, a tale of three fables: It's Cheap, It's Clean and We Need it.

### **Fable 1: It's Cheap**

The NED-time story starts with the premise that a huge, new pipeline, will lower energy costs. While regional electric rates are high, gas projects other than NED are planned to fix that issue. While domestic gas prices are low enough to disrupt energy markets, an uneven playing field created the disruption, not the mighty hand of the free market. The Energy Act of 2005 gave gas suppliers the advantage of not paying for damage to air and water. The costs of harmful emissions and unusable water don't go away, we pay for them; NED-time stories help the myth of cheap gas persist.

NED carries a price tag of \$4-6 billion, and is the only project (of the five gas projects planned) to employ wide-scale land taking by eminent domain to claim its route. NED's latest land-use estimate claims 6,761 acres of as yet undisturbed land from Wright, NY to Dracut, MA. Huge compressor stations, a 36 inch transmission pipe pushing the highest pressure allowed (1460 psi), and an as yet undisclosed co-location agreement with Eversource for ROW access, contribute to the most costly greenfield project anyone can remember. Yet, we are asked to believe NED will yield the least expensive gas.

### **Fable 2: It's Clean**

Like all good fairy tales, we're happy to skip the parts that keep us up at night. Natural Gas has managed to rebrand itself as 'clean', even though the definition of clean energy is 'energy that does not release harmful greenhouse gas into the atmosphere'. Natural Gas is made of methane and its collection, transport and use release both methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. We're ignoring regional reports that say more natural gas reliance means increased emissions. We're relying on assurances that all this NED gas is to be used as a temporary *bridging fuel*. But the scale of NED signals a shift backward. It says, we're not building a bridge, but opening the floodgate to future fossil fuel dependence.

New Hampshire wants cost effective, environmentally responsible, reliable energy. Kinder Morgan wants maximized profits while the rules are in their favor, through increased market share. Both goals are fine, unless we note the fact that they are at cross-purposes. NED favors Kinder Morgan's goals. We are going along with a premise that says we can significantly increase our reliance on natural gas, with no adverse economic or environmental impact. New England's electric grid was 24% gas in 2000, 52% gas in 2014, and is projected to be 87% gas (even with no NED), when the current gas projects are completed. Having significant additional gas piped to the region, means domination. Near-total reliance on fossil fuel for our electric power generation takes us back 40 years on our clean energy continuum!

### **Fable 3: We Need It**

After more than a year of courting customers, 20-year commitments for NED remain tepid. Recent MA DPU filings show Portland Natural Gas Transmission Systems' C2C' project offering to supply additional gas to cover NED's contracts, through existing pipes, without the need for eminent domain or harm to

pristine lands and watersheds. Long term Liquid Natural Gas contracts have also been signed to assure ratepayers access to fuel during peak demand periods through 2024. If NED isn't built, ratepayers will suffer no loss of service or price gouging as domestic shale gas is coming to Dracut, MA through existing pipelines. If we follow Kinder Morgan's plan, we'll be converting systems in every sector to a single fuel source, which leaves us more vulnerable during peak periods, than we are today. We have strong reasons to resist over-building our natural gas infrastructure.

Adding the Northeast Energy Direct line (NED) will....

- 1) Promote over-reliance on a an unsustainable fossil fuel source
- 2) Unravel gains in regional energy portfolio diversity
- 3) Increase price volatility (through dominant market share and export market pressure)
- 4) Force ratepayers buy 20th century infrastructure, without solving 21st century problems
- 5) Diminish investments in clean energy and innovation
- 6) Steal market share from 'clean' energy competitors (i.e. Vermont Yankee)
- 7) Increase greenhouse gas emissions, ignoring our responsibility to the next generation

Any of these outcomes would damage our regional energy economy. All are likely.

Why would NH be willing to sacrifice 17 towns on the altar of increased fossil fuel dependence, when less costly bridging strategies exist?

- NED does NOT solve our energy costs, it reinforces the conditions that lead to price volatility.
- NED does NOT solve our greenhouse gas emissions problem, it takes us backwards, away from cleaner alternatives.
- NED promises easy solutions to difficult problems - the kind that only exist in NED-time stories.

Granite Staters know the meaning of need; we don't need NED.