



District of Columbia Government  
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A  
PO Box 15020  
Washington, DC 20003



## ANC 6A Resolution 3-2023

# OPPOSITION TO WASHINGTON GAS' APPLICATION TO THE DC PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL OF THE PROJECTpipes 3 PLAN

**Introduction** ANC 6A has been the unfortunate site of some of the implementation of “Project Pipes” with years of work ongoing on Florida Avenue NE. The Washington Gas contractors at this site have damaged the foundations of row houses on Florida Avenue NE and harassed constituents who are on foot and on bicycles. They have dropped metal plates from a height, having them crash down in front of homes; left loose metal plates on the roadway, resulting in neighbors being kept up at all hours with the sound of trucks running over metal plates; left rusty and rotting equipment in our community with no permit for the use of public space; failed to provide safe accommodations for pedestrians and people on bicycles, as required under DC law; and left construction vehicles idling for hours at a time in violation of DC law. The behavior of Washington Gas contractors has endangered the lives of our constituents. The shoddy work has also damaged cars passing through on Florida Avenue NE. We are appreciative of the efforts of DDOT to oversee and ameliorate the impact of this project, but the oversight is insufficient to prevent harm.

The immediate impact of this unnecessary project is bad enough, but on top of that, the global impacts of Project Pipes are harrowing. Global climate change is an existential danger, and it is worsening faster than expected. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released its Sixth Assessment Report indicating that “Earth is likely to cross a critical threshold for global warming within the next decade, and nations will need to make an immediate and drastic shift away from fossil fuels to prevent the planet from overheating dangerously beyond that level. . .” (New York Times, Climate Change Is Speeding Toward Catastrophe. The Next Decade Is Crucial, U.N. Panel Says, March 21, 2023) The government of the District of Columbia has been at the national forefront in limiting greenhouse gas emissions that contribute directly to global warming.

The District’s Building Energy Performance Standards require large existing commercial and residential buildings to increase their energy efficiency over time. In 2022, DC passed a law requiring that the District be “carbon neutral” by 2045, which means producing no greenhouse gas emissions that are not offset. At the same time, DC passed legislation requiring that after 2026 all new commercial building construction and major renovations be built to net-zero standards. DC also passed legislation requiring District government-owned or funded new buildings to be built to net-zero standards before 2026.

Moving towards carbon neutrality means there must be a decreased use of methane gas (so-called “natural gas”), particularly for building heat and hot water. However, Washington Gas Light Company

(Washington Gas or WGL), the monopoly gas utility, is continuing a 40-year accelerated pipeline replacement project, PROJECTpipes, to replace nearly all of the gas infrastructure in the District.

The total PROJECTpipes cost is estimated at \$4.5 billion, which is paid by gas customers in the form of a gas rate surcharge, in addition to expenses already included in the regular rate. Washington Gas is now asking the DC Public Service Commission (PSC) for \$671.8 million for Phase 3 of PROJECTpipes for the next five years, which is expected to cost the average District ratepayer at least an additional \$300 over that time period. Later phases of PROJECTpipes would cost ratepayers considerably more.

As has been shown in a recent report by the DC Department of Energy and the Environment, a significant number of the gas leaks in WGL's system could be repaired at a fraction of the cost of full pipe replacement. When full replacement is truly necessary, as is sometimes the case, potentially WGL's regular pipes maintenance program could adequately meet this need, discontinuing PROJECTpipes entirely. As the District moves forward with electrification, there will be fewer ratepayers to cover the rising costs of gas infrastructure, thereby increasing the financial burden on remaining ratepayers, and disproportionately on low-income, disadvantaged gas customers. In addition, parts of the gas distribution system will be no longer used or useful and will become "stranded" assets, costs for which ratepayers, and possibly even taxpayers, will nonetheless be financially liable. Consumer-quality "natural gas" burned in homes is up to 95% methane.

When methane leaks, as it does regularly from the drilling and pipe network, as well as from household appliances, it adds to global warming at more than 80 times the rate of carbon dioxide in the 20 years after emission. Methane combustion in gas powered appliances produces toxic air pollutants including nitrogen oxides, formaldehyde, benzene, and particulates, as well as both carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Washington Gas needs to engage in a robust planning process to redefine its business model as the District of Columbia weans itself off fossil fuels. The DC Public Service Commission must develop a plan to phase out the use of greenhouse-gas producing fuels in coordination with the transition to clean, renewable energy.

WHEREAS: Washington Gas contractors implementing 'Project Pipes' on Florida Ave NE have damaged property and decreased the well-being of our constituents; WHEREAS: Global climate change is an existential danger, and it is worsening faster than expected; WHEREAS: The District of Columbia has committed through legislation to protecting the climate by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a net-zero level by 2045;

WHEREAS: PROJECTpipes is an exorbitantly expensive and wasteful plan that will keep the District locked into using methane fuels for decades to come; and

WHEREAS: Placing the burden on gas ratepayers to maintain a polluting and dangerous gas distribution system is unacceptable as the District moves away from methane fuels toward electrification;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A of the District of Columbia opposes Washington Gas' PROJECTpipes Phase 3 Application;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 6A calls upon our elected officials to protect the interests of the residents of the District of Columbia over those of the monopoly utility, Washington Gas, and to hold hearings and work to oppose further harmful work under the auspices of ‘Project Pipes’. Specifically, we ask our elected officials to ensure that Washington Gas engages in a robust planning process to redefine its business model as the District of Columbia weans itself off fossil fuel and that The DC Public Service Commission develops a plan to phase out the use of greenhouse-gas-producing fuels to bring about a just and equitable transition to clean, renewable energy, consistent with DC law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chair, Vice Chair, and/or their designee(s) are authorized to represent ANC6A on this matter. Copies of this resolution will be sent to the DC Council, The Office of the Peoples Council, and the Office of Mayor Bowser.

Attested by:



Amber Gove Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

This Resolution was approved by a vote of 7-0-0 on December 14, 2023 at a public meeting<sup>1</sup> of ANC6A at which a quorum was present.

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<sup>1</sup> ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on, [anc-6a@googlegroups.com](mailto:anc-6a@googlegroups.com), and [newhilleast@groups.io](mailto:newhilleast@groups.io), at [www.anc6a.org](http://www.anc6a.org), on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.