



Progress Report

CLF's Fight to Clean Up Cape Cod's Bays Continues

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Thousands Sign Climate Pledge. You Can Too!

Five Questions for Kate Saunders

Putting a Lifelong Love of Nature to Work

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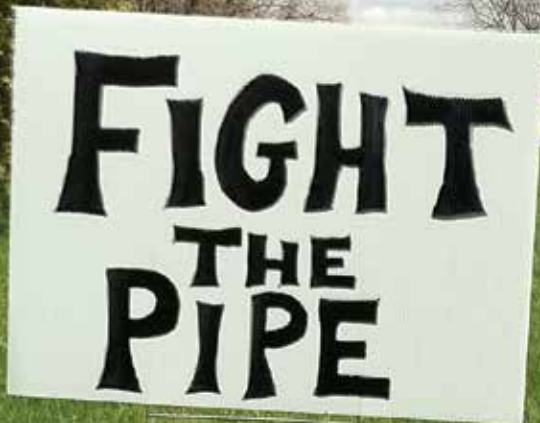
CONSERVATION MATTERS

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COVER STORY

NATURAL GAS: FRIEND OR FOE?

With Region's Climate Goals at Risk, CLF Works to Keep Gas in Check



Yard sign in Addison, Vermont, opposing a proposed 41-mile pipeline expansion.

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NATURAL GAS: FRIEND OR FOE?

With Region's Climate Goals at Risk, CLF Works to Keep Gas in Check

“We cannot build our long-term energy future on a plan to extract and burn more natural gas. If we build big natural gas capacity now, we’ll be locking ourselves into a future of endless fossil fuel.”

— John Kassel, CLF President

Route 74, the two-lane Vermont highway that runs from Lake Champlain to Cornwall, has become the focal point for yard signs reflecting deep unease about a 41 mile proposed natural gas pipeline extension through Addison and Chittenden counties. Another phase of the controversial project would run a new gas pipeline under Lake Champlain.

Conservation Law Foundation and local environmental groups are expressing serious concerns with the project, which would cut through valuable farmland and fragment 51 large forested wetlands. Of equal importance is the impact the pipeline would have in expanding the region's reliance on natural gas, tying New England's energy supplies to fossil fuels for another 50 to 100 years. Unless done carefully and thoughtfully, new gas infrastructure will make it increasingly difficult to meet state and regional goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

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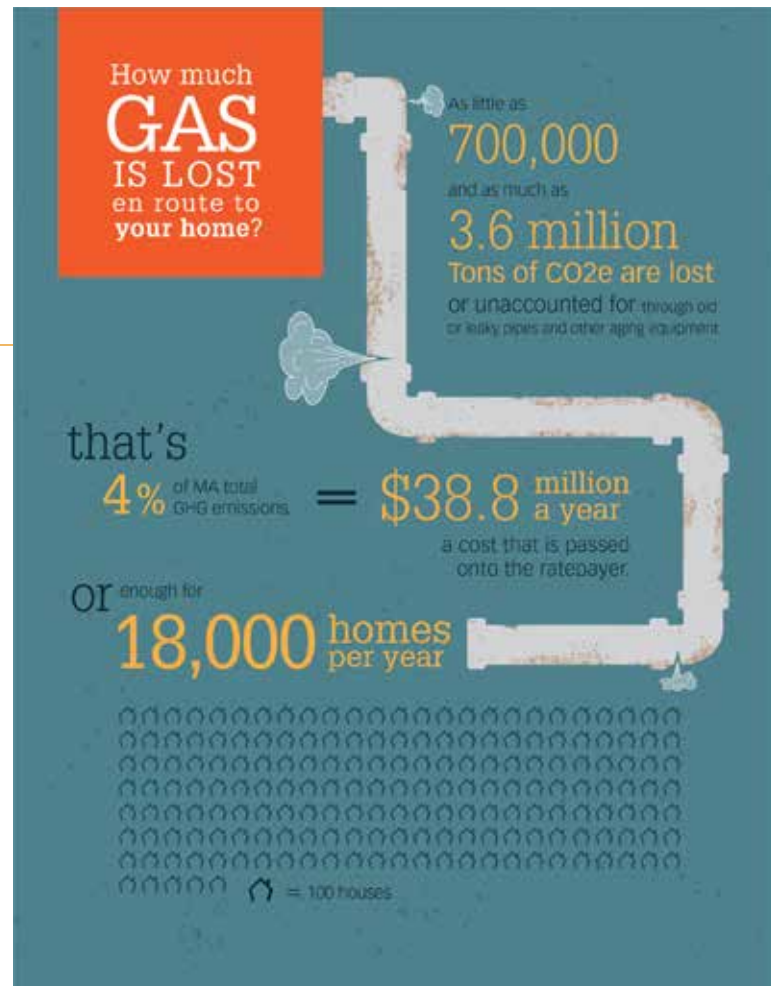
The proposed Vermont pipeline extension is an example of what CLF believes is irrational enthusiasm for new gas infrastructure as an answer to the reliability chal-

lenges presented by the region's steep increase in natural gas use in recent years. Instead, CLF would like to see the regional grid operator, ISO-New England, focus on increased efficiency, renewable energy integration and better market design.

CLF's natural gas advocacy is built on a set of principles that recognize both the short-term economic and environmental benefits of natural gas while highlighting deep concerns about the long-term impacts that overreliance on natural gas would have on our climate and crucial renewable energy development.

On the benefits side of the ledger, said N. Jonathan Peress, Director of CLF's Clean Energy and Climate Change program, cheap and plentiful natural gas is helping New England move away from the dirtier coal and oil-burning plants that the region has relied upon for over half a century, and, if managed correctly, can hasten the region's transition to clean, renewable energy.

One critical role natural gas can play in New England is to provide a reliable back up for intermittent wind and solar power. “When the wind doesn't blow and the sun



doesn't shine, gas can play an important role in ensuring that our energy needs are met," Peress said.

But natural gas infrastructure and extraction methods can impose devastating impacts on communities and emit methane, a particularly potent greenhouse gas. In fact, unlike what its proponents would have us believe, natural gas production and use results in significant greenhouse gas emissions. In Vermont, for example, the pipeline extension proposal by Vermont Gas would over its lifetime lead to 3 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions, about the same amount of putting 500,000 more vehicles on the region's highways.

CLF's report, "Into Thin Air," found that leaks from aging natural gas pipes in Massachusetts cost state ratepayers \$38.8 million annually. The report can be found at <http://clf.org/intothinair>



Before building new gas pipelines and plants, CLF believes that it is critically important that New England take steps to ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure, including minimizing leaks and using cost effective ways to increase energy efficiency. "Before we jump to conclusions that involve massive investments, we ought to be taking a hard look at the whole system, including the market structure, to make sure that we maximize our existing infrastructure and supply," continued Peress.

One portion of CLF's advocacy focuses on the impact of natural gas leaks. Last year, CLF released a white paper that for the first time documented the significant environmental and economic consequences of aging, leaky natural gas pipelines around

Massachusetts. The leaking gases, known as "fugitive emissions," are a significant source of greenhouse gases and saddle gas customers with paying for millions of dollars of natural gas that literally disappears into thin air each year.

"Any attempts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by switching to natural gas will be substantially undermined as long as existing pipelines continue to leak," said Shanna Cleveland, CLF Senior Attorney and author of the report, *Into Thin Air: How Leaking Natural Gas Infrastructure is Harming Our Environment and Wasting a Valuable Resource*.

In Massachusetts alone, Cleveland reported, between 8 and 12 billion cubic feet of methane are estimated to be lost to leaks each year.

In neighboring Vermont, the proposed pipeline extension would make the state's commitment of using renewables to meet 90 percent of its energy by 2030 almost impossible to achieve, said Sandra Levine, a CLF Senior Attorney.

"Before we blindly commit to a pipeline that will have far-reaching impacts for generations, we need a thorough and transparent understanding of what is at stake," Levine said. "Natural gas will play an important role in our energy supply over the next decade, but we need to make certain that it is a role that leads to a cleaner and healthier planet."

BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS

What's Next for Salem Harbor Station?

For decades, Conservation Law Foundation and other public health and environmental organizations have campaigned to close the Salem Harbor Station, the aging coal and oil-fired power plant on the North Shore of Massachusetts. Now that the plant is under court order to retire by June 1, 2014 and prohibited from using coal in the future, CLF is fighting to ensure that Massachusetts does not replace coal with another fossil fuel—natural gas—without considering climate impacts.



Some background: In 2010, when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered the grid operator to develop a reliability solution to allow Salem Harbor Station to retire, ISO-NE provided a simple and relatively inexpensive solution: electric transmission line upgrades that would meet the area's electricity needs and allow for use of newer and cleaner energy resources like efficiency, conservation and renewables such as wind and solar.

But now Footprint Power, which purchased Salem Harbor Station last year, is arguing that building a new natural gas plant is needed to ensure reliability.

CLF strongly disagrees and is fully engaged in proceedings before the Energy Facilities Siting Board, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to make sure that Salem Harbor is shut down permanently. Watch CLF's blog, The Scoop, at www.clf.org/blog/ for updates.

CAPE COD BEGINS PLANNING TO CONTROL NITROGEN POLLUTION

CLF Lawsuits Spur State Action on Water Quality



Algae fed by nitrogen choke Falmouth Harbor.

“Communities are now very engaged in trying to solve the problem instead of denying that there is a problem in the first place.”

— Christopher Kilian, Director, Clean Water and Healthy Forests

THE PROBLEM

Nitrogen pollution is a current problem and growing threat for the fragile bays and estuaries that support Cape Cod's economy. On the Cape, water from septic and stormwater control systems and wastewater treatment plants flows quickly through coarse sandy soils, bringing tons of excess nitrogen into streams and open waters. This nitrogen acts like a fertilizer, causing massive algae blooms that threaten animal and plant species and can make the Cape's bays unsafe for swimming, boating and shellfish consumption.

CLF IN ACTION

In 2010 and 2011, Conservation Law Foundation and Buzzards Bay Coalition filed two Clean Water Act lawsuits in U.S. federal court. The lawsuits sought to hold the Environmental Protection Agency accountable for failing to take actions to reduce nitrogen pollution into 68 waterways on Cape Cod. Christopher Kilian, Vice President and Director of CLF's Clean Water and Healthy Forests Program, said

that nitrogen pollution is driving the Cape to the brink of ecological disaster. The lawsuits, he said, were intended to spur EPA to implement its obligations to review, update and enforce a working and time-bound plan to stop the flow of nitrogen-laden wastewater and stormwater into the Cape's bays.

PROGRESS

Prodded by the CLF lawsuits, the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Fund provided \$3 million to the Cape Cod Commission to complete a regional wastewater treatment plan. The commission set what Caitlin Peale, a CLF attorney, called an “ambitious timetable” for drafting a plan by May 2014 and has 37 public meetings set for this summer into the late fall. The last regional water plan — called a Section 208 plan — was completed in 1978 and has not been updated since.

CLF experts are hopeful that a regional legal framework that includes planning, infrastructure development and vigorous pollution controls will be established on

the Cape in time to stop nitrogen pollution from choking the waterways that are so essential to the Cape. CLF's Kilian said there are very few voices on Cape Cod who deny the nitrogen problem. “Communities,” Kilian added, “are now very engaged in trying to solve the problem instead of denying that there is a problem in the first place.” The Cape Cod Commission's public hearings on the regional wastewater plan will continue through the fall and early winter.

NEXT STEPS

In late August, a federal judge denied EPA's motion to dismiss a key claim in one of CLF's lawsuits and requested additional information on other claims. CLF is now exploring its options for next steps. Of the judge's rulings, which left open a legal path for resolving the Cape's water pollution problem, Kilian said, “Stopping illegal nitrogen pollution and restoring the Cape's waters to health remains our goal.”

WHERE CLF STANDS

CLF's Kilian offered a one-sentence solution for the nitrogen problem on the Cape: “If conversion to composting toilets could be widely implemented, the nitrogen problem could largely be solved on Cape Cod.” Kilian added that if a home or business has a composting toilet, “it is highly likely that there will no longer be a measurable discharge of nitrogen.”

So how likely is widespread adoption of composting toilets? Kilian said that increasing numbers of homeowners are using them on the Cape and *Business Week* magazine selected a composting toilet as one of “25 products that might just change the world.”

AROUND CLF

RHODE ISLAND

CLF has notified the owners and operators of the Central Landfill in Johnston that it intends to file a citizens lawsuit for violations of the Clean Air Act. CLF believes the facility has violated emission standards by failing to adequately collect landfill gas, which contains harmful pollutants, including hydrogen sulfide, volatile organic compounds, and methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

MAINE

Capping a two-year effort by CLF to restore the alewife fishery, new legislation reopened fish ladders in the St. Croix that had been closed under a 1995 law. The new legislation, adopted with over-

whelming support by the state legislature, is expected to bring the population of this keystone species back to its healthy levels.

MASSACHUSETTS

CLF applauded the passage of a \$600 million annual finance package for Massachusetts' ailing transportation system but warned that much more work needs to be done to create the reliable modern transportation system the Commonwealth wants and needs.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

CLF dismissed a proposed new route for the Northern Pass transmission project as little more than a "band-aid on a gaping wound." CLF said the new proposal

by PSNH has the same flaws as previous routes and would harm the environment of communities throughout New Hampshire.

VERMONT

After more than a decade of vigorous battles, the owners of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant announced that the plant will close and be decommissioned in 2014. In a statement, CLF welcomed the hard-fought news: "old technology, whether nuclear or coal-fired, cannot compete with newer, more efficient resources, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Vermont is leading the way into an era of smarter more efficient ways to generate electricity."



Veronica Eady has joined CLF as vice president and director of Healthy Communities and Environmental Justice. In announcing her appointment, CLF

President John Kassel noted that Eady prepared Massachusetts's first Environmental Justice Policy and brings CLF more than three decades of experience in enforcing environmental laws, advocating for environmentally burdened communities and advancing progressive environmental and civil rights policy.

Jeff Barnum has been named the new Great Bay-Piscataqua WATERKEEPER, a



vital position charged with building a strong local voice for Great Bay and advancing innovative solutions to protect the estuary. An avid fisherman, Barnum

played a leading role in establishing an oyster shell recycling program to establish new oyster beds in Great Bay.

Caitlin Peale is the newest staff attorney for CLF Massachusetts. She works on a number of issues related to CLF's Coal Free New England 2020 initiative and protection of New England's waters.



The Boston Chapter of the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy has selected CLF Senior Attorney Shanna Cleveland to receive its Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall Award. The prestigious award is presented to a member of the Boston community who best embodies the mission of ACS to promote the vitality of the U.S. Constitution and the fundamental values it expresses.

FOLLOW CLF ONLINE

Sign up for email alerts @ www.clf.org

In between quarterly issues of *Conservation Matters*, make sure you stay informed of what CLF is doing and how you might be able to get involved. Doing so is easy – just find us at any one of the following websites.

- CLF's blog: clf.org/blog/
- Twitter: @theclf
- Facebook: facebook.com/TheCLF
- LinkedIn
- Google+

KATE SAUNDERS

Vice President for Development



A lifelong environmentalist, Kate looks forward to helping CLF raise the resources necessary to protect New England.

1 What drew you to CLF?

I've always admired CLF and seen it as a real force in New England. But when I met John Kassel and CLF's leadership team, I was struck by the scope of work and how such a lean organization could make such a difference. After learning about the CLF programs, I felt personally challenged to help the organization garner more resources to do its tremendous work.

2 Sometimes people say that they've been training all their lives for a certain job. Was this the case with you and CLF?

I was fortunate to grow up in a family of people who love nature and care deeply about protecting it. These topics were normal dinner table conversation, and hiking, canoeing and being outdoors were what we did on weekends and during vacations. And now as a mother, these values take on an even deeper meaning. So it's no accident that I've followed a career path that's allowed me to pursue my own passion for conservation and ultimately led me to CLF. In the past, I've worked for Mass Audubon and The Trustees of Reservations in Massachusetts.

3 What are your early impressions of CLF?

CLF advocates bring incredible talent and sophistication to their jobs of protecting the environment in New England. We are truly on the cutting edge of policy development and environmental advocacy. It's invigorating to be in an organization that has the courage to stand up to polluters,

as well as the determination to pursue workable solutions to really challenging environmental problems. I can see already that there will be no shortage of success stories to share with our amazing members and volunteers.

4 What are you looking forward to most about your job?

I'm excited to show our donors and supporters how CLF is making a difference by introducing them to the people and places that are benefiting from our work. I want to build an active CLF community in which our supporters can connect with one another and share their excitement and understanding of our work. In these days of social media and online connections, engaged supporters can be your most enthusiastic and influential proponents.

5 What are the top three things you would want someone who is new to CLF to know about giving to the organization?

I would want them to know that an investment in CLF goes a long way and provides remarkable value over time. I'd tell them that they're supporting critical work that cannot be done by any other organization. And I'd let them know that our members share in our successes, and that we couldn't achieve our goal of a thriving New England without them.

Reach Kate at
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or (617) 850-1738

To learn more about
giving to CLF, visit
www.clf.org/donate



COOL GLOBES HAS COME TO BOSTON!

CLF is proud to be part of this world-renowned public art exhibition meant to get more people talking about solutions to climate change. CLF's globe, "New England's Climate Pledge," was designed by artist Alexandra Overing and bears the signatures of people from all over New England and beyond who have said they'll do their part to reduce climate pollution.



YOU CAN VISIT THE CLF GLOBE
on the Boston Common through October 15.

And add your voice to CLF's Climate Pledge online:
WWW.CLF.ORG/CLIMATESOLUTIONS

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



The cover story of this issue of *Conservation Matters* looks at the expanding role natural gas is playing in New England's energy mix. While our

neighboring regions to the south and west are tackling the very poignant issues surrounding the extraction of natural gas, we at CLF are engaging in a delicate and complicated balancing act: how does New England reap the short-term benefits of this cleaner-than-coal fossil fuel while staying on track to achieve our region's climate goals?

Natural gas has an important role to play in our region's energy future. It is increasingly replacing coal and oil in electricity generation, which means reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

But our region's enthusiasm for today's cheap natural gas cannot be allowed to determine our energy future—a real concern as arguments for new natural gas infrastructure and proposals to build it gain

momentum. The reality that natural gas is a finite, volatile, greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuel is one that we cannot ignore.

That's why CLF's advocacy is focused on helping to keep our region's relationship with natural gas in check—making sure we are maximizing our current capacity by minimizing leaks, improving efficiency through better market design, shaping policies that govern how old gas infrastructure is maintained and defending against new, ill-conceived projects. At the same time, we are continuing to push our region toward a clean energy future by improving energy efficiency, deploying renewables like wind and solar, and reducing demand for fossil fuels for electricity and transportation.

If we fail to rein in the gallop toward natural gas, we'll lock ourselves into another 50 to 100 years of burning fossil fuels in New England. And that, from a climate perspective, is just unacceptable. You can be assured that CLF will do everything in our power to keep New England moving toward the clean energy future our region wants and needs.

Sincerely,


John Kassel

John Kassel
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