

## RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALTERNATIVES TO NATURAL GAS EXPANSION

**Whereas** NYSEG's rate case (15-G-0284) currently being considered by the Public Service Commission (PSC) proposes the \$17 million Freeville-Lansing Reinforcement project across the Village of Freeville and Towns of Dryden and Lansing, and the \$350,000 Boiceville Expansion project in the Town of Caroline – both natural gas pipeline projects designed to address existing peak demand as well as up to 20 years of load growth, and NYSEG customers will be required to pay for these projects; and

**Whereas** in 2012 (case 12-G-0297) the PSC encouraged natural gas expansion because it would create jobs and provide cheaper, cleaner heating fuel than propane or fuel oil; and

**Whereas** the PSC requires utility customers to provide financial rewards to utility shareholders for adding gas customers, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) uses utility customer fees to provide incentives for converting from fuel oil and propane to natural gas; and

**Whereas** the Town of Caroline is a Climate Smart Community, and recognizes that climate change is a real and urgent public issue that must be addressed by reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency improvements, lifestyle changes, and use of renewable energy; and

**Whereas** Tompkins County is also a Climate Smart Community and has set greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals of 20% less than 2008 levels by 2020 and 80% less by 2050; and

**Whereas** New York State has committed to reduce GHG emissions 50% by 2030; and

**Whereas** residential and commercial use of natural gas for space and water heating accounts for 37% of NY's GHG emissions<sup>1</sup>; and

**Whereas** natural gas (methane) is 100 times more potent a GHG than CO<sub>2</sub> over the next critical 20 years<sup>2</sup>, leakage of methane from hydraulic fracturing is significant<sup>3</sup>, and US methane emissions have increased dramatically over the past decade, especially in the central part of the country, and are estimated to have caused a 30–60% of the global growth of atmospheric methane<sup>4</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> 2014, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; New York State Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Forecast, p. S-7.

<sup>2</sup> 2014, Howarth, R. A bridge to nowhere: methane emissions and the greenhouse gas footprint of natural gas. In *Energy Science and Engineering* [http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/summaries\\_CH4.php](http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/summaries_CH4.php) accessed April 10, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 2016, Turner, Jacob, et.al. A large increase in U.S. methane emissions over the past decade inferred from satellite data and surface observations In *Geophysical Research Letters*; 2 March 2016 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2016GL067987/full> accessed April 10, 2016

**Whereas** in December 2014 Governor Cuomo declared that high-volume hydraulic fracking would not be permitted in New York because of the health impacts it causes; and

**Whereas** the PSC's natural gas expansion initiative increases the market for and use of natural gas and natural gas powered appliances;

**NOW therefore be it**

**Resolved** that expanding markets for natural gas will result in adverse health impacts and water contamination where gas drilling occurs, and be it further

**Resolved** that expanding markets for natural gas will result in increased emissions of this most potent GHG at a time when we need to be reducing our GHG emissions, and be it further

**Resolved** that for municipalities and the State to be successful in reaching their GHG reduction goals we must be reducing - not expanding - our use of fossil fuels, and be it further

**Resolved** that as municipalities and the State reduce their GHG emissions over the next 20 years, expensive new natural gas infrastructure will become stranded assets for which utility customers will continue to pay, and be it further

**Resolved** that natural gas expansion does not make environmental or economic sense and is therefore not in the public interest, and be it further

**Resolved** that prior to undertaking costly pipeline expansion or replacement projects, the utilities should be directed to identify non-pipeline alternatives such as energy efficiency, electric heat pumps and demand response that can meet reliability needs while saving ratepayers money and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and be it further

**Resolved** that the PSC and NYSERDA should curtail incentives that result in natural gas expansion or use of appliances that rely on natural gas, and should instead develop incentives for reducing the number of natural gas customers and supporting installation of non-fossil fuel appliances for water and space heating.

**Resolved** that the Caroline Town Clerk will send a certified copy of this resolution to NYS Governor Cuomo; PSC Commissioner Audrey Zibelman; Honorable Kathleen Burgess, Secretary to the Commission to be filed as part of the public record for case 15-G-0284; Mr. John B. Rhodes, President and CEO at New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; NYS Senator James L. Seward; Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton; Tompkins County Legislature; Town of Dryden Town Board, Town of Lansing Town Board, Village of Freeville Trustees, and the Tompkins County Area Development agency.