

Vermont Gas would like you to believe that what comes out of their pipeline is clean energy. So.....Lets talk about fracked gas...

A study done by the Environmental Defense Fund in Canada and Penn. estimates that methane leakage from fracking wells is five times greater than what industry reports. Methane had 25 times more warming properties than co2. The EPA calculates overall leakage of methane from fracking to be between 1.33% to 9%. And any leakage above 3% makes methane as dirty as coal.

When you combine the water and energy needed for extraction with the under reported methane emissions, combustion and co2 releases, fracked gas leaves a bigger footprint than conventional gas. Now add the displacement of native peoples in Canada and the degradation of water and land, and you have a more accurate accounting of the true cost of the gas in our pipeline.

Vermont is complicit in this process, and we bear responsibility for the damages, whether the source is in our backyards or 1500 miles away. Continued reliance on fossil fuels removes us further from our goals of bringing down co2 levels and becoming energy independent. We do not need a "bridge" fuel, we need to act boldly and responsibly now, to develop local and regional renewable power sources.

We know that the primary contributors of co2 in Vermont are transportation and heating. Vermont has many programs in place to expedite weatherization and conservation; Efficiency Vermont, Vt Weatherization Assistance Program, BROCC, Neighborworks, community solar farms, rebates for heat pumps, low cost leasing of solar panels, to name a few. Additional attention to these programs will also provide new jobs and enhance our economy. We have an opportunity with the VW and Chrysler settlements to make substantial gains in the public transportation sector, as well as incentivize electric car purchases.

Briefly, one more topic: Water.

New England will be receiving more water in the form of rain as a result of climate change. This means more flooding, as evidenced by last week's snowmelt/rainstorm, higher water tables, and more freezing and thawing of the ground. This is hardly an environment to be laying fossil fuel pipes in.

Instead, private and municipal hydro power companies should be given low interest loans to upgrade their turbines, so that we can make the most out of the increased rainfall.

There are many solutions that are available and viable right now that we can combine to make an energy future. We cannot continue to parlay off the future of our children by our inaction.

Please support H51, H175, and H214. We need action in the next session.

Respectfully submitted, Candy Jones, Rutland, Vermont