

From: Ned Farquhar [NFarquhar@vermontgas.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2015 1:21 PM
To: Copans, Jon; Coriell, Scott
CC: Elizabeth Parent
Subject: Draft eminent domain press release
Attachments: 1510 pr em dom final nf.docx

Jon and Scott – Here's a press release we will be putting out in about an hour related to eminent domain for the pipeline project. We will file with the PSB at 2. Main talking points are

- We have reached agreement with 94% of more than 160 landowners
- We deeply appreciate the time, energy, and attention of every affected landowner and every community we are working in
- We have taken every step we can to avoid eminent domain and in some cases are still in negotiation – but the timeline is such that (to avoid increased costs and delays) we must have room to finish eminent domain in those cases where it proves necessary, because our goal remains to complete this project late next year
- Thousands of residents of Addison County and some significant businesses will have access to a new affordable energy choice, and some have already made investments in expectation of the pipeline
- We don't release the names of specific landowners affected by eminent domain
- We are filing nine petitions today, filed two last April (and one settled) so there will be a total of 10, although some current negotiations might also result in agreement and will allow us to withdraw some of today's petition

Call if you have questions!

Ned Farquhar
222-1038



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2015

**Vermont Gas Reaches Agreement with 94% Percent of
Landowners in Pipeline Corridor**

South Burlington, Vt. – Vermont Gas Systems today announced that it has reached right-of-way agreements with 94% percent of landowners in the right-of-way corridor of the Addison-Rutland Natural Gas Project. This marks a significant increase in landowner agreements since last winter, up from 80% in January 2015.

“I want to extend sincere appreciation to more than 150 landowners who have engaged with our team to reach agreement. We thank them for their time and effort. Our goal has been to work positively with landowners, with respect for them and their interests as we move forward on this clean energy project,” said Don Rendall, President and CEO of Vermont Gas Systems.

Construction of the project on time and on budget, with completion in late 2016, requires acquisition of 100% of the right-of-way in the pipeline corridor. Today, toward timely resolution with all remaining landowners, Vermont Gas filed 9 eminent domain petitions with the Vermont Public Service Board. Vermont Gas will continue negotiating or mediating with landowners who are willing to seek alternatives to the eminent domain process. The right-of-way needed includes access for surveying, construction, and burial and maintenance of the underground pipeline and associated facilities.

The project is on time and on budget. The company’s contractors have almost finished construction planned for summer and fall 2015, and the company expects to complete the entire project through Addison County to Middlebury in late 2016.

Out of respect for privacy, Vermont Gas Systems does not release the names of landowners who may be involved in eminent domain proceedings.

“Eminent domain is a last resort. We must file these petitions now because we are at a critical point with respect to maintaining the project construction schedule and controlling costs,” Rendall said. “Wherever possible, we will continue working with landowners outside the eminent domain process to reach agreements.”

In a letter to the Board, the company acknowledged that more than five months ago the PSB stayed action on eminent domain petitions until it issues a decision on whether to revisit its previous approval of the project.

“We respect and acknowledge the Board’s signal in May that it would stay action on the two petitions we filed in April, one of which has since been resolved. Today’s filing will inform the Board of the status of all remaining landowners. Reaching agreement either through mediation, or as a last resort through eminent domain proceedings, is fundamental to bringing the project to completion,” said James Sinclair, Vice President of System Expansion.

The project will bring a valuable energy choice to 4,000 households, businesses, and institutions such as schools and hospitals in Middlebury, Bristol, Vergennes, New Haven, and other Addison County communities. Natural gas is cleaner and more affordable than heating oil and propane. The company points out that historically more than 80% of potential customers have chosen natural gas where it’s available, including about 95% of possible customers in Burlington.

###

About Vermont Gas

Vermont Gas Systems is a leader in energy efficiency and innovation, offering a clean, safe, affordable choice for almost 50,000 homes, businesses, and institutions in Franklin and Chittenden counties. The company plays an important role in Vermont’s clean energy future by displacing higher-emitting fuels and with its award-winning energy efficiency programs. For more information about Vermont Gas visit www.VermontGas.com.

Media Contact

Beth Parent, Corporate Communications Manager, Vermont Gas Systems
PH: (802) 865-1460 / (802) 578-2776
bparent@vermontgas.com