MAINE
NATURAL GAS

April 5, 2019



Anthony Plante
Town of Windham
8 School Road
Windham, ME 04062

**RE: Public Awareness**

Dear Anthony Plante,

***As part of Maine Natural Gas's public awareness program, we are sending out an update which covers multiple topics. Maine Natural Gas asks that you share this with all departments including but not limited to public works, first responders, and managers of all other departments within your community you feel may benefit from this information. As always Maine Natural Gas is committed to work with the community's that we service and in the event any questions arise please feel free to contact us at 207-729-0420 ext. 100 or via email at smason@mainenaturalgas.com.***

## Pipeline Purpose and Reliability

Maine Natural Gas operates 210 miles of natural gas pipelines in Augusta, Bath, Bowdoin, Brunswick, Chelsea, Freeport, Gorham, Hallowell, Pownal, Topsham, West Bath, Westbrook, Whitefield, Windham, and Windsor.

These pipelines quietly, reliably, and efficiently deliver natural gas throughout the service territory for household, commercial, and industrial use. Natural gas energy is the most popular home heating fuel in America and its pipeline system is among the safest and most secure methods of transporting energy.

The natural gas industry works very closely with government and stays abreast of new security methods and technologies to ensure the highest levels of security. Individual gas utilities also evaluate their security procedures on a regular basis and continually enhance security programs as necessary and appropriate to meet their needs.

## Hazard Awareness and Prevention Measures

The United States natural gas transmission and distribution system has the best safety record of any type of transportation system in the country. Natural gas is clean, convenient, and efficient, which makes it the popular energy choice.

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AVANGRID

Like all forms of energy, however, it must be handled properly. Despite an excellent safety record, a gas leak caused by damage to a pipeline may pose a hazard and has the potential to ignite. We work diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures including:

- One-call and Dig Safe® programs
- Inspection programs
- Design and construction practices
- Workforce qualifications
- Public education programs
- Industry safety practices and government oversight
- Pipeline markers and facility mapping
- Leak survey
- Patrol of critical facilities
- Pressure monitoring
- Odorization
- Liaison with city and municipal agencies
- Security measures

## Leak Recognition and Response

A gas leak is usually recognized by the smell, sight, or sound.

- SMELL – Natural gas is colorless and odorless. Before it reaches you, we add a distinctive, pungent odor so that you'll recognize it quickly.
- SIGHT – You may see a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.
- SOUND – You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing or whistling

**What should you do if you suspect a leak?**

- MOVE to a safe environment
- CALL the Maine Natural Gas Emergency Number: **1-877-532-5636**
- DO NOT strike a match, use telephones, switch on/off appliances, lights, or even a flashlight in the area where you smell gas. These items can produce sparks that might ignite the gas and cause an explosion.

For Emergency personnel

- Emergency response officials should secure the site and take steps to eliminate ignition sources
- Evacuate the general public from vicinity of leak
- Contact Maine Natural Gas using the Emergency Number: **1-877-532-5636**

For Excavators

- Stop work and evacuate the site to a safe distance
- Call 911 if there is blowing gas
- Call the Maine Natural Gas Emergency Number: **1-877-532-5636**
- Don't do anything to cause a spark
- Alert everyone on the premises
- Keep the public and traffic away
- Do not try to fix the pipe or slow the rate of leaking gas

- Do not try to extinguish a gas burning fire unless there is a threat to life
- If you suspect or become aware of a dent, scratch, or coating damage to the pipeline, notify the company immediately at 207-729-0420, or use the Emergency Number: **1-877-532-5636**

## Emergency Preparedness

Maine Natural Gas shares contact information with key state and local agencies, specifically the Maine Public Utilities Commission that disseminates the information to other state agencies as appropriate.

Maine Natural Gas periodically revises its Emergency Response Plan and Operations and Maintenance Procedures, and makes them available to the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Our Engineering and Operations Department keeps these documents current and provides necessary training to state and/or local emergency management personnel.

Maine Natural Gas works closely and maintains a continuing relationship with emergency responders to prevent and prepare for emergencies.

## Damage Prevention Awareness and One-Call Requirements

The greatest risk to underground pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. To protect our natural gas pipelines and other underground facilities it is critical that people use the one call system prior to **any** excavation related activities on public and private property. The law requires that all excavators notify the local one call system, Dig Safe®, at 811 or 1-888-DIG-SAFE (1-888-344-7233), at least 72 hours before digging. The one-call center will contact the owners of the underground facilities in the immediate area so that they can mark the location of their facilities prior to excavation. There is no charge to the public for this service. Excavators are required to take certain precautions when working in the immediate area of underground facilities. The one call center can provide the specific details of what is required. Failure to comply with this law can jeopardize public safety, result in costly damages, and substantial fines.

Even if you cause what seems to be minor damage to the pipeline, notify the pipeline company immediately. A gouge, scrape, dent, or crease to the pipe or its coating may cause a future leak or failure. It is imperative that the pipeline owners inspect and repair any damage.

## Pipeline Location

Natural gas is drawn from deep inside the earth and fed into lines that eventually feed into large transmission pipelines that crisscross the nation. The transmission pipelines operate at hundreds of pounds of pressure. Since these transmission pipelines are underground, line markers are sometimes used to indicate their approximate location along their route. The markers display the material transported in the line, the name of the pipeline operator, and the telephone number where the operator can be reached in the event of an emergency. Markers only indicate the general location of a pipeline and cannot be relied upon to indicate the exact position.

Local distribution companies, like Maine Natural Gas, receive natural gas from the interstate pipelines at metering and regulation (M&R) stations. From the M&R stations, natural gas is distributed through underground pipelines safely and reliably to its customers. These

pipelines underneath the street are vital to the local utility infrastructure. Because many of the distribution lines are not marked, and pipeline markers may not always be directly over pipelines, it is critical that people use the one call system prior to any excavation. When excavation work is planned, the pipelines are identified with yellow paint markings or flags.

## Availability of the NPMS

Additional information on transmission pipelines in your area can be obtained from the National Pipeline Mapping System (www.npms.rspa.dot.gov). The mapping system is called Pipeline Integrity Management Mapping System (PIMMA).

Federal, state, or local government officials or a pipeline operator are provided detail access. For access, you must request a User Name and Password from the Office of Pipeline Safety.

## Additional Information

Additional information can be obtained through the following:
American Gas Association: www.aga.org
Common Ground Alliance: www.commongroundalliance.com
Dig Safe®: www.digsafe.com
Maine Natural Gas: www.mainenaturalgas.com
Maine Public Utilities Commission: www.maine.gov/mpuc/
National Pipeline Mapping System: www.npms.rspa.dot.gov
Northeast Gas Association: www.northeastgas.org
Office of Pipeline Safety: ops.dot.gov
Transportation Safety Institute: www.tsi.dot.gov

Sincerely,

Sheena B. Mason, P.E.
Supervisor - Gas Engineering