

From: [Stu Kennedy](#)
To: [Secretary, BPUBoard \[BPU\]](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Docket No. GO23020099 Urgent Action Needed: Implement a Moratorium on Fossil Fuel Infrastructure Projects in New Jersey
Date: Saturday, September 2, 2023 3:31:47 PM

Dear NJ Board of Public Utilities,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the direction of fossil fuel based energy infrastructure projects in New Jersey. Having spent my childhood in the shadow of coal and natural gas power plants, I have witnessed firsthand their adverse impact on our environment and health. As a New Jersey resident, I have suffered significant property damage from severe weather amplified by climate change. As New Jerseyans, we watch record heat and falling water tables across the United States, wondering how long before our turn comes. It is critical that we take immediate action to address these issues and transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources.

The recent conference held by the State of New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) regarding the implementation of Executive Order 317 has brought to light several alarming facts that require urgent attention. Based on the evidence presented at the conference, I strongly urge the BPU to implement a moratorium on approving any new fossil fuel gas or so-called Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) infrastructure projects, except those unquestionably necessary for the safety of existing gas distribution systems.

Here are the key reasons for this urgent request:

1. **Declining Gas Usage:** Market forces, government mandates, tax incentives, and energy efficiency programs are leading to an inevitable, necessary contraction in gas usage. Electric heat pumps like the ones I have installed in my own home are becoming more popular due to their efficiency and lower cost, while electric stoves are outperforming gas stoves. These trends make it clear that new gas infrastructure is unnecessary. Furthermore, Clean Energy and Carbon Reduction Goals: New Jersey has set ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to clean energy sources. Building new gas infrastructure conflicts with these goals and will lead to stranded costs as the industry contracts.
2. **Stranded costs:** Gas distribution companies (GDCs) have been increasing their capital spending despite the industry's contraction. Individual ratepayers should not bear the cost burden of building infrastructure with a long lifespan when it will necessarily be used for only a fraction of that time. This financial burden is unjust: it will disproportionately impact low and moderate-income individuals.
3. **So-called "Renewable" Natural Gas (RNG) and Green Hydrogen:** RNG is not a scalable or economical replacement for natural gas. It still produces GHGs and toxic pollutants. "Green" hydrogen is a commercially unproven, expensive technology with limited applications. These technologies should not be used as justifications for further infrastructure spending.
4. **Incomplete Cost Analysis:** BPU's research and analysis have not included the true total social costs of GHG emissions, including health and environmental harms to the citizens of New Jersey. To act in our interests, it is imperative to quantify and consider these costs before increasing them further.

5. Time Sensitivity: we are already running on borrowed time. Transitioning to clean energy cannot be delayed. A moratorium on new gas infrastructure is necessary to prevent further investment in GHG-emitting energy sources.

Given the urgency of addressing climate change and the clear evidence against new gas infrastructure, I implore the BPU to prioritize the long-term well-being of our state in this and future generations. A moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure projects is the most logical and responsible course of action. We cannot afford to exacerbate the problems of GHG emissions with the folly of stranded costs. Instead, our resources should be directed towards expanding and improving our electrical grid.

Please consider the environmental, health, and economic implications of this decision, and take immediate action to protect our state's future. I urge you to prioritize clean energy solutions and the well-being of all New Jersey residents.

Sincerely,

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