



End Fossil Fuel Expansion in Connecticut

Despite Connecticut's clean energy goals and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, fossil fuels continue to expand.

The fossil fuel industry is rushing to build out new gas-fired power plants and gas pipelines throughout the nation including here in Connecticut. **If they succeed, Connecticut will be locked into a dirty, destructive fuel for decades, sealing our climate's fate.** Gas is primarily composed of methane, which is 87-times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat over a 20-year span. Gas operations cannot be made safe for our climate or public health, and the growth of pipelines and power plants will further pollute our air and water, fragment habitats, and threaten communities.¹

Here are the steps Connecticut must take in 2020 to end fossil fuel expansion

- **Pass a Green New Deal for Connecticut.** The transition from fossil fuels to clean energy has begun in Connecticut. In 2020, Connecticut must create a Green New Deal that ensures an economy-wide transition to 100% clean and renewable energy, creates good jobs, and invests in vulnerable communities.
- **Require agency rulemaking, permitting and other decision-making be consistent with the Connecticut's Global Warming Solution Act (GWSA) climate goals.** Connecticut has ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in the GWSA, yet state agencies are not required to comply with the state law and are issuing permits, etc. that increase emissions.

¹ https://content.sierraclub.org/sites/content.sierraclub.org.ourwildamerica/files/1466-Gas-Rush-Report_04_web.pdf

- **Place a moratorium on new gas plants.** In 2019, the Connecticut Siting Council approved a 650 MW fossil fuel power plant in Killingly, and the CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) tentatively approved the air permit for a 10MW fossil fuel facility in Bristol. Without a moratorium, our agencies will continue to give the green light to such proposals inconsistent with our state's climate goals.
- **Repeal the pipeline tax.** Connecticut law allows the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA) to impose a tax on ratepayers for the purpose of building new pipelines. It is time to take new pipelines, and this law, out of the picture.
- **Repair environmentally significant pipeline leaks, and limit leakage.** According to a study² published by the National Academy of Sciences, methane leakage can as much as double the climate effect of gas. Sierra Club Connecticut's methane leak studies in 2016³ and 2019⁴ showed leaks are prevalent and persistent in our state. Connecticut must require utilities to repair environmentally significant leaks - not just hazardous ones - and limit the amount of leakage allowed.
- **Eliminate incentives for gas conversions.** Connecticut state law allows gas companies to collect ratepayer funds in order to convert customers to gas, with a goal of converting 300,000 customers. Science is clear that we must stop burning fossil fuels. Connecticut must remove this policy and incentivize renewable thermal technologies like heat pumps instead.
- **Eliminate gas appliance incentives in efficiency programs.** Subsidies for gas appliances lock customers into fossil fuels for the life of the appliance. These subsidies must end.
- **Ban new gas hookups.** Connecticut should ban gas hook ups in new construction. Building all-electric is critical to avoid locking in the carbon of long-lived gas infrastructure. Electrification immediately reduces greenhouse gas emissions due to the higher efficiency of advanced electric appliances like heat pumps and induction fuels. Abundant renewable power from the grid will power these nearly carbon free appliances.
- **Require PURA to open a docket on phasing out the gas system with a specific focus on affordable housing transitions.** To meet Connecticut's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, buildings must switch from gas to electricity which will result in a sharp decrease in statewide gas demand. A gas transition strategy is needed to shield residents from sharply higher heating bills, protect workers, and meet the state's climate targets.
- **Create geographically targeted incentives to convert existing gas customers to avoid the need for replacement of gas infrastructure.**

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² <https://www.pnas.org/content/109/17/6435>

³ <https://ctsierraclub.wixsite.com/sierraclub-ct/hartford-mobile-methane-leaks-study>

⁴ https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/66f28e_7e62af04d87a40568aaff9327695532.pdf