

STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

CASE NUMBER 17-3658-PET

PETITION OF VERMONT GAS SYSTEMS, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF  
ITS 2017 INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN

October 10, 2017  
7 p.m.

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550 Dorset Street  
So. Burlington, Vermont

Public Hearing held before the Vermont Public  
Utility Commission, at the So. Burlington High School, 550  
Dorset Street, So. Burlington, Vermont, on October 10,  
2017, beginning at 7 p.m.

P R E S E N T

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SPEAKERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Page</u>
Ross Conrad	5, 21
Lawrence Shelton	10
Rachel Smolker	12
Nancy Baker	14
Barrie Bailey	16, 22
Lynn Furno	18, 33
Margaret Klohck	24, 28
Melanie Peyser	31

1 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Good evening  
2 and thank you for being here tonight. This is a  
3 Vermont Public Utility Commission public hearing in  
4 Case Number 17-3658-PET regarding a petition filed by  
5 Vermont Gas Systems for approval of its 2017  
6 Integrated Resources Plan. My name is Andrea McHugh  
7 and I'm an Utilities Analyst with the Public Utility  
8 Commission. The Commission has appointed me to be  
9 the Hearing Officer for this proceeding.

10 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to provide  
11 an opportunity to hear input from the public  
12 regarding the petition. The comments received at  
13 this hearing will become part of the public record in  
14 this case. In addition to providing comments at  
15 tonight's public hearing you may send the Commission  
16 your thoughts on the proposed project through the  
17 Commission's electronic filing system ePUC or by  
18 email or letter if you do not have easy access to the  
19 internet, and I passed out the handout with that  
20 information on that. If anyone didn't get a handout  
21 -- yes.

22 MS. BAILEY: Is it possible to use the  
23 microphone?

24 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Sure. So, as I  
25 mentioned earlier, there's a handout available that

1 I've provided that provides more information about  
2 the hearing including there's a schedule on the back  
3 side of the handout and it also provides other ways  
4 that you can provide input to the Commission in this  
5 case, including e-mail and mailing addresses for  
6 submitting written comments, and I would like to  
7 remind everyone to be sure to include the Case Number  
8 17-3658-PET in any correspondence with the Commission  
9 regarding this case.

10 Tonight's hearing will be transcribed by a  
11 court reporter, and this transcript along with all  
12 the other comments received by the Commission become  
13 part of the case's public file so that Commission  
14 members, staff, and participants in the case can  
15 consider the comments. Although public comments do  
16 not become part of the formal evidence in this case,  
17 they are especially helpful in raising new issues or  
18 perspectives that the Commission should consider. So  
19 I look forward to hearing your input tonight. The  
20 transcript will be available through ePUC which is  
21 accessible at [epuc.vermont.gov](http://epuc.vermont.gov) and that information  
22 is on the handout as well.

23 So the purpose now is to hear from folks and I  
24 have the sign-up sheet here and I want to make sure  
25 that everyone can hear what the person is saying so I

1 would ask that you stand up and give your comments  
2 starting with Mr. Ross Conrad.

3 MR. CONRAD: Hi.

4 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: Hi. Thank you.

5 MR. CONRAD: I'm Ross Conrad,  
6 Middlebury. So you want to know our thoughts about  
7 the plan. Generally it's my feeling that the plan is  
8 not comprehensive enough. It's not as up to date as  
9 it perhaps could be and is not as consist as it could  
10 be. My understanding is the last plan was quite a  
11 bit longer. Seemed like it was more comprehensive  
12 than this one. One example, just as an example, talk  
13 about terms of consistency. For example, throughout  
14 the plan there's a mention of expansion -- expanding  
15 of gas pipelines to the south down to Rutland maybe  
16 by 2030, and on page 26 they say such an expansion  
17 would be evaluated on the response to substantial  
18 customer demand resulting from a significant price  
19 advantage over heating oil as far as public policy  
20 and community support.

21 Then on page 212, again referring to  
22 this expansion, they say it would only be done in  
23 response to substantial customer demand resulting  
24 from a significant price advantage of heating oil and  
25 strong policy support, which is different wording

1 from 26 which is also all different from page 22  
2 where again in referring to the expansion they say it  
3 will be evaluated on response to substantial customer  
4 demand, strong public policy support, and resounding  
5 local community backing, which I actually like a lot  
6 better, and then they even have different wording  
7 again with response to this expansion down south on  
8 page 71, and so it would be nice if they were  
9 consistent in what they are trying to say.

10 Heat pumps. They account for them in their  
11 alternative cases and they claim the long term impact  
12 of heat pumps on the company's forecast is unknown.  
13 Well I mean everything in there really is unknown.  
14 This is forecasting which is based on your best guess  
15 of the current information you have. I mean it's  
16 pretty clear heat pumps are way more efficient which  
17 is one of the reasons why the efficiency program  
18 promotes them. It's clear that Vermont has a goal of  
19 reducing fossil fuel use, increasing renewables,  
20 reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I mean the  
21 reality is natural gas is a fossil fuel. There's  
22 nothing in their plan, for example, of the different  
23 financial forecasts, the high and the low, the base,  
24 they don't look at what could conceivably happen is  
25 negative growth. Every one of their forecasts all

1           assume some upward growth pattern, at least in the  
2           graphs that were supplied in the plan as opposed to  
3           what we saw tonight which was different, and so, you  
4           know, it seems to me if they are going to really plan  
5           for Vermonters to be protected, they should be  
6           thinking about what are they going to do if gas sales  
7           drop and don't go up all the time like they are  
8           planning but actually go down. Actually negative  
9           growth. I don't see any of that in the plan and  
10          given the fact that it's a fossil fuel, fossil fuels  
11          are really kind of a dying industry at this point.  
12          They are on their way out and they are just starting  
13          maybe to realize that given the goals, given the  
14          current state of the environment and what's going on,  
15          that needs to be included in the plan. It's not  
16          anywhere. They are assuming we're going to be using  
17          gas forever and it's going to continue and we're  
18          going to be using more and more, and I think we need  
19          to also look at that other scenario. I'm sorry. I  
20          got all these notes here. They are not as organized  
21          as I would like. Didn't have quite enough time.

22                           HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Any written  
23                           comments are considered and paid just as much  
24                           attention to as comments in person. So feel free --

25                           MR. CONRAD: Appreciate that. The other

1 thing is they rely on 10-year averages for the  
2 heating degree days in their sales methodology and we  
3 know that the climate is warming. That's what all  
4 the scientists say and my personal experience, and  
5 the scientists tell us the changes in the climate are  
6 not linear. They are going to be not necessarily a  
7 nice gradual. It could be big jumps and there's  
8 nothing in their planning that seems to take into  
9 this account that the climate is warming. So they  
10 are using a 10-year average and yet just I think the  
11 four or five last years, four of them were the  
12 hottest on record, and so an average of 10 years is  
13 actually probably going to be, I guess you could say,  
14 very conservative and not maybe as accurate as it  
15 would be because we know temperatures are going up,  
16 winters are not getting as severe as they used to be,  
17 we're not getting as much snow and all that.

18 Now according to Green Mountain Power heat  
19 pumps offer a 25 percent savings over oil and 45  
20 percent savings over propane, and yet again I don't  
21 see where in their planning like with their 20  
22 percent price advantage, which I think was the base  
23 projection, that's not competitive with heat pumps  
24 and, therefore, again part of the problem I think is  
25 that there's not -- this came up in our discussions



1 before you came, there's not a lot of the information  
2 that went into the decision and what went into the  
3 plan. There's not a lot of that background stuff and  
4 it would be nice if more of that was provided.  
5 There's no discussion of how prices can be expected  
6 to be increased as a result of the Addison Natural  
7 Gas Project and the various legal challenges that  
8 have arisen from their expansion. Now I know that  
9 they can't know for sure what the price is going to  
10 be because it has to be approved by the Public  
11 Utility Commission, but they can assume reasonably  
12 there's going to be some kind of increase because  
13 they have got to get their money back and yet I  
14 didn't see any of that in there.

15 So it really seems like -- another thing that  
16 came up was the renewable natural gas program that  
17 they have got in the plan it's -- because it was  
18 apparently submitted in July it says that's pending  
19 approval. I think that should be updated to say  
20 since it's been approved and then maybe they should  
21 include that now also in the plan unless you have to  
22 go with the draft they have and it can't be changed,  
23 but I'm assuming this is so you can have them go back  
24 and do more work.

25 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Yeah. We would

1 expect that VGS would address any changes that have  
2 happened especially since the Commission approved the  
3 --

4 MR. CONRAD: The current draft I have  
5 here says it's still pending approval. Needs to be  
6 up to date I think. Basic stuff like that. So  
7 again, you know, it could be more comprehensive, more  
8 up to date, more consistent, and I think we would  
9 have a better idea and a better quality plan. Thank  
10 you.

11 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you for  
12 your comments. I appreciate it very much. Lynn  
13 Furno.

14 MS. FURNO: I'll wait until later.

15 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Sorry.

16 MS. FURNO: I would like to wait until  
17 later to talk.

18 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Sure. Lawrence  
19 Shelton, would you like to give your comments?

20 MR. SHELTON: Hi I'm Lawrence Shelton.  
21 I've got some notes here. Kind of scattered. I'll  
22 do my best. Pardon me for stumbling along. First of  
23 all, I would like to just for the record point out  
24 that I'm not a fan of coal and I'm not in support of  
25 mountaintop mining. I'm looking at this 20-year IRP

1 and I'm thinking that the plan that's played out here  
2 is targeting a time when my grandchildren would  
3 inhabit this planet, and the Vermont law that  
4 requires this IRP process, you know, requires a  
5 strategic plan for providing low cost energy, and a  
6 very real cost that's going to be inflicted on all of  
7 us is climate change. My grandkids' kids may not  
8 have a planet to live on and that's a very real cost,  
9 and during the first hour I made some notes as we  
10 were talking about the things that I just jotted  
11 down. A few things, you know, that just spurred me  
12 on this.

13           You know the lady said about the IRP is  
14 based on the conditions and what I'm saying is what  
15 about the conditions of climate change, and I'm going  
16 to just jump in here and say this about that. The  
17 reason it's so imperative to address with regard to  
18 natural gas is that the greenhouse gas that we've  
19 been dumping into our atmosphere with carbon methane  
20 is over a hundred times more potent a greenhouse gas  
21 than carbon and building natural gas pipelines and  
22 making plans for expanding production. The man over  
23 hear said as demand increases so will production  
24 increase. This is the most deadly climate killing  
25 technology that we have on the planet now, and what

1 Vermont Gas is doing -- because what corporations do  
2 is they make marketing plans and they -- you know  
3 they plan how to make corporate profits. That's what  
4 we should expect them to do. They are not evil  
5 because of that. That's what corporations do. We  
6 the people with our government representing us need  
7 to recognize that you're going to kill our planet and  
8 the conditions, the financial plan, the long term --  
9 one of the things that was said earlier was that they  
10 were talking about the plans and the IRP and they  
11 said that long term plans are not meaningful. That's  
12 a fact Jack because -- because what you're doing is  
13 killing our planet. So I guess that was pretty  
14 fragmented and broken and perhaps incoherent. So I  
15 apologize.

16 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: No. It was  
17 very helpful, sir. Thank you. Rachel Smolker.

18 MS. SMOLKER: Oh good. I'm glad I get  
19 to follow up on that because actually I was scanning  
20 through the IRP I didn't find one single mention of  
21 methane, although there were several mentions of  
22 carbon free. Carbon is only one of the greenhouse  
23 gases. Of course methane is another and very  
24 important and far more potent and is the concern with  
25 natural gas that, you know, the contribution to

1 climate change. So that's not really relevant to a  
2 cost analysis immediately. It's not relevant in an  
3 immediately obvious way, but I bring to your  
4 attention a couple of things.

5 One is a study that was just released in  
6 August 24th of this year said man-made fossil methane  
7 emission levels are higher than previously believed,  
8 and this study shows that there's been a gross  
9 underestimate of the leaking of methane from natural  
10 gas wells and from pipelines and infrastructure. So  
11 we have heard that several times in the past few  
12 years. We underestimate, whoops we actually really  
13 underestimated, and so there's just been a series of  
14 having underestimated the emissions -- the methane  
15 emissions from natural gas wells and fracking  
16 operations and pipelines and infrastructure.

17 So the other thing is that currently there are  
18 several, you know, federal level bills that would  
19 limit methane emissions in various different ways  
20 from the natural gas industry, and that actually  
21 would have a very direct effect on cost analysis for  
22 the future of the natural gas industry and Vermont  
23 Gas. We know specifically for Vermont Gas.

24 So I don't see -- and one other thing is  
25 a recent study -- I'm just sort of scanning through

1 things that come across my wires. One other thing  
2 that has come out recently have been a couple of very  
3 good analyses showing what the costs of failing to  
4 address climate change would be -- the economic costs  
5 of failing to address climate change. So these are  
6 factors the regulation of the methane that could come  
7 down in the future. The costs of failing to -- the  
8 cost to society and that would even include Vermont  
9 Gas. The cost to everyone of failing to address  
10 climate change because Vermont Gas's infrastructure  
11 will also be affected by climate change and floods,  
12 whatever. We know that the infrastructure is also  
13 vulnerable to those changes. So all of these things  
14 are sort of in the bigger picture of what a real  
15 comprehensive cost analysis would look like and they  
16 are completely absent as far as I can tell from this.

17 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you for  
18 your comments. Appreciate it very much. Nancy  
19 Baker.

20 MS. BAKER: I'm Nancy Baker. I could go  
21 into a bunch of things, but I just wanted to point  
22 out that the first graph in the presentation tonight  
23 that they presented to the public -- like here we  
24 are. This is our cost analysis was based on last  
25 year's figures 2016. They had not updated them and

1 it made it really look like natural gas is the way to  
2 go, and I think that that's one of my complaints that  
3 here they are. They have had I think two extensions  
4 to get everything together for you guys, a three-year  
5 comprehensive plan, and yet it's not really  
6 comprehensive because it's being based on an old  
7 financial statement, and when they talked about  
8 quantitative versus qualitative data, because we were  
9 looking for data, we were told that that was one of  
10 the conditions of this to the Public Utility  
11 Commission; that doing this plan basically what we  
12 got was well you know we kind of talked about it, we  
13 did this, we did that, but they even based some of  
14 their decisions on data that the Vermont I believe  
15 it's the Public Utilities Commission doesn't use as  
16 an analysis tool.

17 So I just feel like it's kind of smoke and  
18 mirrors in places. It looks nice. It's a nice  
19 presentation, but it really isn't an accurate  
20 presentation, and I think you will get more comments  
21 about that about the different types of data that we  
22 need to be included and to be seen before people can  
23 make a good judgment about this plan. Thank you.

24 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: Thank you.

25 Barrie Bailey.

1 MS. BAILEY: I'm Barrie Bailey  
2 B-A-R-R-I-E B-A-I-L-E-Y. I look at this plan as a  
3 marketing plan full speed ahead. Planet be dammed.  
4 The legislation had the three-year plan includes  
5 environmental information. They don't have it in  
6 here, and I don't know if the Department of Public  
7 Service said okay you can get a pass on it, but as  
8 you can see it's a very important thing right now in  
9 our culture. Just look at what's just happened.

10 In Addison County where I live I'm on  
11 the Regional Planning Commission and we have been  
12 given a charge by the State to explain to the Public  
13 Utilities Commission where we will allow alternative  
14 energy of each kind. There are maps involved that  
15 were done by the State and we were shown graphs of  
16 the growth or lessening of various fuels as a part of  
17 this proposal coming down from the State, and I  
18 believe it came out of the Department of Public  
19 Service. It shows in Addison County natural gas  
20 usage is going to go way down to meet our energy --  
21 State energy goals. This plan does not address that  
22 factor. That's why I said it's like, you know, full  
23 steam ahead. We're just going to keep marketing as  
24 fast as we can even it doesn't meet the State Energy  
25 Plan which it's supposed to fit in with.



1           So -- and just for specifics in Addison County  
2           you have a proposed growth of gas in Addison County  
3           that's probably extremely unrealistic because Addison  
4           County has the highest amount of renewable growth out  
5           of the counties that are served by the pipeline.  
6           There's no doubt about it. We have a tremendous  
7           amount of renewables and it keeps growing, and one of  
8           the things that I brought up to Vermont Gas is that  
9           they said they are a public utility but -- an energy  
10          efficient utility, but it's partial. It's like being  
11          crippled. It's like they are only doing it for their  
12          gas customers, whereas, Efficiency Vermont does it  
13          for the whole state. They are only promoting gas.  
14          They are not promoting heat pumps. If you say you  
15          want a heat pump, they will say well it probably  
16          isn't a good idea to just use that with gas, but they  
17          are not offering the savings -- the energy savings  
18          that heat pumps can produce. So it's like why give  
19          them the title of Energy Efficiency Utility when it's  
20          not the whole spectrum. It's only the part that they  
21          can make money off of and market. So I think that's  
22          a misnomer and it's misleading, and in the newspaper  
23          they advertised our efficiency plan in the Addison  
24          Independent, but it doesn't say oh you can't get it  
25          if you don't have natural gas.

1 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you, Ms.  
2 Bailey. Ms. Furno, did you want to speak?

3 MS. FURNO: I'm a Hinesburg resident who  
4 is very concerned about the environment. My concern  
5 is so strong that I have installed 16 solar panels on  
6 my property at a very high cost to myself. I know I  
7 will never get that money back, but I don't care. My  
8 concern is for this planet and for my grandchildren,  
9 and I will also be installing heat pump exchange  
10 units into my house this November.

11 Since I have moved into my property 26 years  
12 ago we were a zone 3. We were lucky if we could  
13 plant zone 4 plants. I can plant zone 5 with no  
14 problem now and I suspect that it won't be long  
15 before I'm planting zone 6. That's ridiculous. Zone  
16 3. I was a zone 3 and I'm a zone 5 now. I haven't  
17 seen a red squirrel all year, but the gray squirrels  
18 have moved into my property. They don't belong  
19 there. The red squirrels are supposed to be there.  
20 They don't exist any more. I haven't seen a bat in  
21 how long I don't know.

22 One of the things that really sticks in my  
23 craw is every time I hear Beth Parent talk about  
24 fracking gas as though it's a clean energy, I'm fed  
25 up with hearing that. It's not a clean energy. We

1 know it's not a clean energy. She knows it's not a  
2 clean energy and she continues to say it because the  
3 media repeats it, and there's a lot of people out  
4 there who are too ignorant to understand it. She's  
5 lying flat out.

6 It's a tobacco strategy. We all know where it  
7 comes from. Another thing that's been bothering me  
8 for years -- well not years but a long time, John St.  
9 Hilaire stood up in a meeting in Hinesburg and he was  
10 asked what's the worst case scenario if something  
11 were to happen to this pipeline. He said the worst  
12 case scenario would be we would just have to fix it.  
13 Well we all know that's not true. We've seen the  
14 news. We've seen the explosions. There's more and  
15 more of them all the time. If you go on Wikipedia  
16 and you look at the list of accidents since 2000,  
17 it's so long I haven't been able to count all of the  
18 accidents that have happened. So the things that can  
19 happen in Vermont due to this pipeline are explosions  
20 that could kill people. They could also leak into  
21 our streams, our lakes, our waters and destroy  
22 thing,s, and we don't even know what has happened to  
23 the wetland areas that they have already gone  
24 through.

25 I mentioned this at the meeting in

1 Hinesburg. There was a report done by a man who  
2 studies sound. He goes into areas where they are  
3 going to cut down trees and he records all the sounds  
4 in the forest and then he goes back years later after  
5 the forest appeared to have grown back and the sounds  
6 of the forest are distinctly different from what they  
7 used to be. The animals that disappeared from those  
8 areas they didn't come back. So we don't really know  
9 the damage that this has caused by them burying their  
10 pipelines, but I'm sure it's a lot more than we  
11 understand; and, lastly, I would like to point out  
12 that there has already been a situation where Vermont  
13 Gas had a leak in their pipeline and over 20  
14 residents in Williston called the fire department. I  
15 believe the school was evacuated. Am I correct about  
16 that? The school and some businesses were evacuated  
17 from the area because they couldn't figure out where  
18 the smell was coming from, but it was because of the  
19 pipeline. They were testing the pipeline and they  
20 will tell you that the smell from gas isn't  
21 dangerous, but if you do your research, long exposure  
22 to that gas can cause severe problems for people.  
23 Just look at Porter Ranch where they had to take over  
24 2000 families and evacuate them. They had to close  
25 two schools because the children were coming in 50 at

1 a time with nose bleeds that the nurses couldn't  
2 stop. This isn't safe and I don't want it in  
3 Vermont. I don't want it in this world. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you for  
5 your comments. That's the end of the list. Is there  
6 anyone else who wishes to speak that hasn't already  
7 spoke yet? Okay and, Mr. Conrad, you wanted to say a  
8 few more words?

9 MR. CONRAD: Could I add something?

10 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Sure.

11 MR. CONRAD: In terms of being  
12 comprehensive another example I didn't mention was on  
13 page 512 where they are looking at other system  
14 investments and they give a description of the  
15 planning and the assessments of the other system  
16 investments. There's five bullet points in there of  
17 other system investments, but they only give the  
18 description of the planning and assessment for three  
19 of them. They should also give a description and  
20 planning and assessment for the risk based  
21 assessments of the transmission and distribution  
22 system pursuant to federally mandated transmission  
23 distribution system integrity, management programs;  
24 and the other bullet point they kind of ignored was  
25 the ongoing leak detention initiatives that they

1 should give a description of planning and assessment  
2 on as well. Those are two areas where for some  
3 reason they just decided not to provide any  
4 description of planning and assessment.

5 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you.  
6 Okay. Anyone -- go ahead. Yes. Ms. Bailey, right.  
7 Thank you.

8 MS. BAILEY: I would also like to  
9 discuss the looping. It's talked about here as the  
10 preferential method for expanding capacity. My  
11 concern is that it is also the preferential method of  
12 destroying as many people's properties that they have  
13 already gone through this easement under threat of  
14 eminent domain and now they are going to have their  
15 properties dug up again if the capacity and growth  
16 that's projected by Vermont Gas happens, and they  
17 talk about things to produce more capacity like  
18 putting in 16-inch line. Well I don't know about up  
19 there, but Addison County it's not a 16-inch line.  
20 It means they have got to dig up the whole system.

21 Secondly, well maybe we just do the loop in 16  
22 inch. Again it's somebody's property. It's their  
23 home and this is for a profit for a foreign  
24 corporation, GazMetro, and it's taking more of their  
25 home. There was a court case in Pennsylvania after a

1 couple had two 32-inch pipes, two 16-inch pipes, two  
2 12-inch pipes and they wanted to put another huge  
3 pipe in on their land, and they took it to the  
4 Supreme Court and the Court said it's not your land  
5 so you can't do anything about it, but the cost to  
6 the human population is obscene if we go with full  
7 growth ahead, and I think that people should know  
8 about it when they sign up that they should be  
9 explicitly told what happens to people, and I know  
10 that you're planning to go back and loop in Milton to  
11 Georgia, and I want to know they didn't explain  
12 whether that was for the capacity of Addison County  
13 or whether further capacity later on, and then the  
14 next capacity they said was -- would be I think phase  
15 nine because the Georgia one is phase eight looping.  
16 The phase nine looping would start in Georgia and go  
17 south instead of north and would come into Addison  
18 County. There's nothing for the general person who  
19 is signing up to know that this would happen to their  
20 friends and neighbors in the county. I had to read  
21 this 30 page or more document to find it. So it's  
22 again smoke and mirrors. We're just going to give  
23 you the glib natural gas's cleaner, safer. No it's  
24 not. We're just going to get this little easement  
25 through your property. No you're not. You're going

1 to dig it up again and again. A lot of smoke and  
2 mirrors.

3 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: Thank you.  
4 Yes. Can you state your name for the record please?

5 MS. KLOHCK: My name is Margaret  
6 K-L-O-H-C-K from Middlebury. Cloak like cloak and  
7 dagger. We've been involved in this pipeline thing  
8 for over four years and watched the absolute  
9 indescribable destruction of people's land. The  
10 course of dealing with residents whose land they have  
11 to go through has been horrendous and traumatic.  
12 Unbelievable things that have gone on. I can't  
13 describe to you. It's just awful.

14 Anyway, but one thing nobody's mentioned  
15 is when Vermont Gas goes through people's residences  
16 or their property, their property values go down the  
17 john. This is their investment. Most people's homes  
18 are their investment whether for retirement or for  
19 whatever purposes, and this really has an effect on  
20 the investment in their homes and their property, and  
21 that really I know it's a human thing, it's not so  
22 much a legal thing, but -- and that seems to have  
23 been overlooked completely with the treatment that  
24 most people have received from Vermont Gas going  
25 through this property -- this process, and I just



1 want that to be listed in there some place because  
2 it's -- it's really been horrendous.

3 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you for  
4 your comments. Are there any other folks that would  
5 like to speak tonight and relay their comments? I  
6 want to thank everyone for coming out tonight. You  
7 raised some important issues. As the Hearing Officer  
8 I -- this is the beginning of the process. The  
9 schedule for the case is on the back of that handout  
10 and I appreciate everyone coming out tonight and  
11 giving us your thoughts and thank you again.

12 MS. KLOHCK: So what's the deadline to  
13 file written comments?

14 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: There's no  
15 deadline to file written comments. There is a  
16 deadline for motions to intervene. A deadline for  
17 motions to intervene refers to if someone wants to  
18 become a formal party in the case. So I would just,  
19 you know, encourage folks to file their public  
20 comments, you know, as soon as you can, but before  
21 the deadline for motions to intervene would be  
22 helpful so that the Department of Public Service and  
23 the Commission have your thoughts early in the  
24 process. So thank you for that question. Yes,  
25 ma'am.

1 MS. BAKER: So if you go back and say to  
2 Vermont Gas this plan needs to be more comprehensive,  
3 it needs to be this, it needs to be that, you need to  
4 put this in it, you need to have updated graphs, will  
5 there be another hearing like this to look at the new  
6 plan before it's approved or will it just get  
7 approved because they have done what our comments  
8 said they needed to do?

9 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Well typically  
10 we wouldn't have a second public hearing unless there  
11 was -- unless the public requested it. If there were  
12 folks that wanted that opportunity, then as part of  
13 the comments they could provide that feedback to the  
14 Commission and the Commission would consider having a  
15 second public hearing.

16 MS. BAKER: Okay. So a revised would be  
17 put out on the web site or put out somewhere so we  
18 could all have access to it?

19 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Yes. EPUC,  
20 which is the Commission's electronic file management  
21 system, will have all filings that are officially  
22 made in the case. So anything that the Department of  
23 Public Service files, anything that Vermont Gas  
24 files, all the public comments too are in there as  
25 well and so they are viewable to anyone that is

1 interested, and then the transcript for this hearing  
2 and for any subsequent hearings that are had will be  
3 in there as well. So if there are any updates filed  
4 by Vermont Gas or any requests that are issued by the  
5 Commission, that all will be in the ePUC web site  
6 which is -- you just need to sign up and create an  
7 account in order to view those documents.

8 MS. BAKER: So is it possible that this  
9 IRP will be rejected as the plan for the next three  
10 years?

11 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: It's possible.  
12 The more likely scenario would be at this point to  
13 have there be some exchanges and questions and then,  
14 you know, see how that unravels, and basically the  
15 process is I as the Hearing Officer would make a  
16 recommendation to the Commission and then the  
17 Commission would adopt my recommendation or they  
18 would do their own investigation. Any other  
19 questions?

20 MS. KLOHCK: To follow that process so  
21 it goes through all this process you just described,  
22 is there any place in this for people who are unhappy  
23 with this to make their -- really upset about it to  
24 make sure feelings are known depending on what the  
25 gas company chooses to come up with versus public

1 opinion? I mean is there any more say that we have  
2 in this or is this once this is decided it's a done  
3 deal?

4 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Well there's  
5 the public hearing tonight and then any comments that  
6 are filed in writing are considered and used to -- to  
7 ask questions and to help develop the record in the  
8 case that would eventually inform the decision. So  
9 to answer your question about if there's another  
10 chance, I mean there's the formal process which is if  
11 an individual or an entity wanted to become a party  
12 to the case, then that would be -- you know there's  
13 legal issues associated with that and  
14 responsibilities. Yes. So as I said earlier any  
15 comments that are received are reviewed and  
16 considered and thought about and both parties, the  
17 Department and VGS, will receive those as well.

18 MS. KLOHCK: I'm going to ask one more  
19 comment. Seems like I'm just making negative  
20 comments, but for four plus years we have all been  
21 through a lot with Vermont Gas in a lot of different  
22 directions, and it seems like from my perspective and  
23 I think a lot of people here we've always ended up on  
24 the low end of the stick. That Vermont Gas's wishes  
25 and whatever policies always seem to take precedent,

1 and I'm really, really hoping that something  
2 different is going to come out of this to make it  
3 more fair and manageable. Really would be amazing  
4 and somewhat of a miracle, but I'm going to hope for  
5 it.

6 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Thank you for  
7 your comments. Yes, ma'am.

8 MS. BAILEY: You said there would be  
9 discussion back and forth with Vermont Gas and the  
10 Board as they are considering these things?

11 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: With the  
12 Department.

13 MS. BAILEY: The Department. So it's  
14 the Department of Public Service and the Board not  
15 the Public Utilities Commission?

16 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: The Board is  
17 now the Public Utility Commission. If I said Board  
18 it's because I'm still getting used to -- I'm still  
19 getting used to the new lingo. So yes.

20 MS. BAILEY: So who is the discussion  
21 between?

22 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: The Department  
23 is a party to the case and the Commission is the --  
24 like the judge. The arbitrator. So as the Hearing  
25 Officer that's my role. So the Department and VGS

1 they are both parties to the case so they have  
2 responsibilities to ensure that the case proceeds and  
3 that they provide the information that is needed.

4 MS. BAILEY: My concern is that what's  
5 talked about actually gets into the final plan, and  
6 the fact that the public service does not -- the  
7 Department of Public Service has not up to now  
8 provided advocacy for the public, even though that  
9 word is in their name, they have left the public  
10 dangling.

11 MS. KLOHCK: Exactly what I was trying  
12 to express.

13 MS. BAILEY: And I think it's time that  
14 the courtesy is extended to the public, okay here's  
15 the conversation we had. It's recorded. It's sent  
16 out to the people, especially the people that are  
17 here tonight, and that we have a chance to comment  
18 again because it will be changed. It will not be the  
19 same document. So then again if you don't have  
20 another hearing on the change, you can't say anything  
21 about that.

22 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Well anything  
23 that is filed in the case will be on the ePUC web  
24 site and comments are ongoing. There's no deadline  
25 for comments to be reviewed and received.

1 MS. PEYSER: Melanie P-E-Y-S-E-R. How  
2 will the public actually know what is discussed and  
3 know which changes were made? In other words,  
4 filings will be on the web site, but in terms of the  
5 actual process, or VGS has said that they have no  
6 analysis studies, analysis, working papers in  
7 addition to what is in the actual IRP. DPS's  
8 guidelines say those should be made available to the  
9 public. One would imagine that if DPS, for example,  
10 were to ask a question of VGS that they would then  
11 provide analysis in response. How will the public  
12 get access to that?

13 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: You mean if  
14 there were to be discovery?

15 MS. PEYSER: No. If they were to have  
16 discussions because the actual process we're  
17 developing an IRP is apparently meant to be  
18 cooperative between DPS and VGS. The process,  
19 according to DPS's guidelines again, are meant to  
20 facilitate exchange of information between utilities,  
21 the Department of Public Service, the Public Service  
22 Board, and the public quote unquote. It seems it's  
23 somewhat difficult to actually obtain that  
24 information and I can give you an example.

25 Thanks to the amazing Judith Whitney

1 today a copy of the MOU that we signed in the 2012  
2 IRP docket was posted. It was not previously  
3 available even though it was incorporated into the  
4 Board's order. How could we comment possibly on  
5 whether or not this IRP actually complies with the  
6 terms of that MOU and the prior order which had  
7 multiple requirements for this IRP without having  
8 that made available to the public? My experience  
9 with Judith Whitney -- I know ePUC is new. She's  
10 amazing. She can find things and get everything up,  
11 but she actually had to go to the State Archive to  
12 get this document.

13 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Yes.

14 MS. PEYSER: I find that hugely  
15 concerning because I don't understand how the Public  
16 Utility Commission is enforcing its orders if it does  
17 not actually have the documents on which they are  
18 based and documents that have been incorporated into  
19 the order, but I also think that you can't have a  
20 public hearing and offer an opportunity for the  
21 public to comment if they don't have all the  
22 information available to them. The fundamental  
23 information. Forget the extras, right. We don't  
24 even have the basics, and so I just want to sort of  
25 be sure that you know that information doesn't have



1 to be obtained through discovery because I think in  
2 the public's experience DPS doesn't ask a whole lot  
3 of questions, right? So if we have to depend on DPS  
4 as the public advocate to actually get us  
5 information, you know it's not -- it is not typically  
6 a particularly adversarial process.

7 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: Well I  
8 understand your point about the attachment because it  
9 is referenced in the order and I reviewed the order,  
10 and the process now is that anything that is  
11 referenced in the order is actually attached to the  
12 order for, you know, going forward. So this was  
13 2012. So -- but the point well taken and we've  
14 definitely -- the Commission has made a huge effort  
15 to make sure they are accessible, but I understand  
16 your point and so I can answer some process related  
17 questions, but as far as, you know, the details of  
18 the case I am here to listen and to hear. So if  
19 there's any other process related questions or  
20 comments that people would like to get in -- would  
21 you state your name again?

22 MS. FURNO: Lynn Furno.

23 HEARING OFFICER McHUGH: Oh Lynn.

24 MS. FURNO: Earlier this evening you  
25 weren't in the room, but we were looking at graphs

1 that they admittedly say were incorrect. So I think  
2 what they are saying is really important that we get  
3 the correct information.

4 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: I agree and I  
5 would expect that any revisions that Vermont Gas  
6 files should identify in a cover letter, you know,  
7 what the changes are just to make it very clear and  
8 easy for me to understand and I think that would be  
9 helpful to the public as well. So I will make that  
10 request to folks at VGS now. If you could just pay  
11 attention to that, that would be really helpful.

12 MR. CONRAD: As the Hearing Officer are  
13 you also on the Public Utility Commission?

14 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: No. The  
15 Commission is the three appointed members; Anthony  
16 Roisman is the Chair, and then Margaret Cheney and  
17 Sarah Hofmann are the two Commissioners. So as the  
18 Hearing Officer -- most of the cases are heard by  
19 Hearing Officers and not by the Board directly, and I  
20 as the Hearing Officer make a recommendation to the  
21 Commission and then the Commission will adopt that  
22 recommendation and/or hear the case directly.

23 MS. KLOHCK: I want to say thank you for  
24 listening. It seems like we have had hearings and  
25 informational settings before and it's kind of like

1 we're inviting you here to talk and vent and get your  
2 feelings out and then nothing changes, but I have a  
3 good feeling about what happened here tonight.

4 HEARING OFFICER MCHUGH: Well I  
5 appreciate everyone coming out and voicing your  
6 concerns and raising issues that will help to inform  
7 the investigation. So I'll adjourn now and thank you  
8 again.

9 (Whereupon, the proceeding was  
10 adjourned at 8 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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4  
5 I, JoAnn Q. Carson, do hereby certify that  
6 I recorded by stenographic means the public hearing re:  
7 Case Number 17-3658-PET at the South Burlington High  
8 School, 550 Dorset Street, South Burlington, Vermont, on  
9 October 10, 2017, beginning at 7 p.m.

10 I further certify that the foregoing  
11 testimony was taken by me stenographically and thereafter  
12 reduced to typewriting, and the foregoing 35 pages are a  
13 transcript of the stenograph notes taken by me of the  
14 evidence and the proceedings, to the best of my ability.

15 I further certify that I am not related to  
16 any of the parties thereto or their Counsel, and I am in  
17 no way interested in the outcome of said cause.

18 Dated at Burlington, Vermont, this 13th day  
19 of October, 2017.

20  
21 \_\_\_\_\_

22  
23 JoAnn Q. Carson

24 Registered Merit Reporter

25 Certified Real Time Reporter