



BERKSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION TEAM

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Protecting the environment for wildlife in support of the natural world that sustains us all.

July 6, 2026

Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Scoping Comments of Berkshire Environmental Action Team on Algonquin Gas Transmission's Pre-filing Proposal FERC Docket #PF26-7

Dear Secretary Reese,

Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) is a 501(c)3 organization with a mission to protect the environment for wildlife in support of the natural world that sustains us all. BEAT advocates for safe, clean, accessible energy for all and opposes toxic, dangerous fossil fuel infrastructure, including fracked gas pipelines, compressor stations, meter stations, LNG facilities, and expansions of local gas systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Report for the Algonquin Reliable Affordable Resilient Enhancement Project, Docket No. PF26-7-000. Please accept these comments regarding the proposed (R.A.R.E) expansion project. BEAT believes the Resource Reports identify several issues that warrant additional analysis during FERC's environmental review.

Purpose and Need

Section 7(e) of the Natural Gas Act requires the Commission to determine whether a certificate is required by the "present or future public convenience and necessity;" otherwise, "such application shall be denied."¹ The Commission's determination should consider whether the proposed project is necessary to serve the public interest in reliable, reasonably priced energy service. Consistent with its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the

¹ Natural Gas Act, 15 U.S.C. § 717f(e) (2018). <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/15/717f>

Commission should also evaluate whether the project’s stated objectives could be achieved through non-pipeline alternatives with fewer environmental impacts.

Algonquin Gas Transmission (AGT) states in Resource Report 1 that the purpose of the proposed project is to “increase firm gas supply to local distribution companies (“LDCs”) and enhance reliability across the Northeast region.”² Resource Report 10, however, evaluates alternatives primarily according to whether they would satisfy AGT’s contractual obligation to provide additional gas supply.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) should independently evaluate whether the projected regional energy demand could be met through non-pipeline alternatives rather than construction of infrastructure capable of transporting an additional 73,500 dekatherms per day of natural gas. The alternatives analysis should evaluate non-pipeline alternatives on their environmental merits, rather than limiting consideration to existing contractual arrangements. The renewable energy alternatives analysis should incorporate recent developments in energy efficiency, electrification, renewable generation, energy storage, and demand-response technologies that reduce or eliminate the need for additional gas infrastructure.³

By defining the project’s purpose primarily in terms of increasing firm gas supply under existing shipper contracts, AFT narrows the range of alternatives considered. The Commission should independently evaluate whether this definition appropriately reflects the broader public interest served by the project – as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Even in light of *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* (2025)⁴, the Commission should not accept AGT’s framing of Purpose and Need without proper consideration and analysis of any non-emitting alternatives. Currently, AGT’s definition of Purpose and Need exists at the level of individual shipper contracts rather than the level of the regional energy service the Project purports to serve.

Public Interest Substantiation

In request of FERC certificate issuance, AGT’s filings assert strengthened regional reliability and reduced price volatility claims yet do not identify an independent analysis demonstrating that the project is necessary to maintain regional reliability or reduce price volatility.

Resource Report 1 cites no study or assessment that identifies a documented shortfall or pipeline system constraint that the Project would address nor any quantified analysis showing that the specific proposed volumes are necessary to achieve reliability or price stability. By

² Algonquin Gas Transmission, LLC. (2026, April). Algonquin Reliable Affordable Resilient Enhancement Initial Pre-filing Draft Resource Report 1 FERC docket no. FE26-7-000. FERC ELibrary ; FERC. (p. 1)

https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_number=20260406-5183&optimized=false&sid=c3a7f586-86fe-41eb-a91c-6e22c2f04cae

³ Khan, A. H., Bahar, A. N., Islam, A., & Wahid, K. (2026). A review of battery storage technology in renewable energy utilization. *Arabian Journal for Science and Engineering*, 51(8), 10405–10427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13369-025-11038-4>

⁴ Seven County Infrastructure Coalition et al. v. Eagle County, Colorado, et al. Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, No. 23–975. https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/23-975_m648.pdf

contrast, ISO New England's 2025 Regional System Plan concludes that modeled energy shortfall risk remains manageable under scenarios evaluated, assuming the gas system remains reliable.⁵

FERC should, under its requirements to section 7(e) of the NGA to confirm whether the proposed project serves present or future public convenience and necessity, demand analysis of the scope of claimed constraint on the system, whether AGT's contract-based Purpose and Need statement is of proper scope to relieve that constraint, and analysis on whether or not it may be addressed by non-emitting alternatives. Before determining that the project satisfies the public convenience and necessity standard under Section 7(e) of the Natural Gas Act, the Commission should independently evaluate the nature and magnitude of the claimed system constraint and whether the record demonstrates that the proposed project is necessary to address that constraint. The Commission should also evaluate whether AGT's contract-based statement of Purpose and Need appropriately reflects the public convenience and necessity standard or whether it narrows the scope of reasonable alternatives considered during the environmental review. Finally, the Commission should evaluate whether non-pipeline alternatives could achieve the stated reliability objectives with fewer environmental impacts.

The Commission should also consider the project's long-term climate implications as part of its public interest determination. Expansion of natural gas infrastructure may result in additional greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the project. These impacts should be evaluated alongside the project's anticipated reliability benefits and the environmental performance of reasonable alternatives.

We request a full accounting of resulting downstream emissions from the additional 73,500 dekatherms per day of natural gas that Enbridge predicts to transport, and their associated public health impact impacts and costs. The environmental review should quantify foreseeable downstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with the additional gas transportation capacity proposed by the project and evaluate their potential climate and public health impacts.

Vagueness

AGT frequently uses the term "practicable" when describing mitigation measures, including reductions in temporary workspace, narrowing of rights-of-way, and implementation of erosion and sediment controls. However, the Resource Reports do not define the criteria that would be used to determine where and whether these measures are practicable.

Additional detail regarding implementation of mitigation measures is needed to allow the Commission, affected landowners (especially abutters), and the public to evaluate the effectiveness of these commitments. AGT should clearly identify the circumstances under which specific mitigation measures would be implemented, including the criteria used to determine whether such measures are practicable. AGT should also describe the locations, timing, and duration of proposed mitigation activities and explain how compliance with these

⁵ The Probabilistic Energy Adequacy Tool (PEAT) studies for 2027 and 2032 were developed by ISO New England (in collaboration with the Electric Power Research Institute) to evaluate regional energy risks during multi-day extreme weather. ISO New England Inc. (2025). 2025 Regional System Plan (p. 16). https://www.iso-ne.com/static-assets/documents/100030/final_2025_rsp.pdf

commitments would be documented and monitored. AGT should identify all locations where wetland grading is proposed and explain why less disruptive alternatives, such as matting, alternative construction techniques, or modifications to workspace design, would not be feasible.

Project Segmentation

The Algonquin Gas Transmission Enhancement Project should be evaluated in the context of recent and proposed modifications to the broader Algonquin pipeline system. Enbridge has previously proposed several major expansions of the Algonquin Pipeline system including Atlantic Bridge, Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM), and Access Northeast. Although some components of these proposals were constructed, Access Northeast and parts of Atlantic Bridge were not completed. More recently, several smaller projects have been proposed separately, some of which are components of previously proposed system expansion projects.

Recent projects, including the E-1 System Regulator Installation Project (CP24-21) and Sakonnet River Pipeline Replacement Project (CP24-49), have also increased system capacity. Additional proposals currently under development, including Project Beacon, would further expand the Algonquin system.

Although replacement of the Cape Cod Canal bridges necessitates relocation of existing pipelines, the associated infrastructure changed proposed by AGT may increase the capacity of that portion of the transmission system.. The Commission should evaluate these projects collectively when assessing cumulative environmental impacts.

Taken together, these projects raise questions about whether the cumulative environmental impacts of continued expansion of the Algonquin pipeline system are being fully evaluated. Under NEPA⁶, the Commission should evaluate the combined effects of connected, cumulative, and foreseeable actions when determining the scope of its environmental review. Courts have recognized that segmentation may obscure the full extent of environmental impacts where related projects are reviewed separately (*Delaware Riverkeeper Network v. FERC*, 45 F.4th 104 (D.C. Cir. 2022)). The Commission should therefore evaluate whether the environmental review for this project addresses cumulative impacts and connected actions.

⁶ *Friends of Animals v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv.*, 28 F.4th 19 (9th Cir. 2022)
Food & Water Watch v. Fed. Energy Reg. Comm'n, 28 F.4th 277 (D.C. Cir. 2022)
Rocky Mountain Peace & Justice Center v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv., 40 F.4th 1133, (10th Cir. 2022)
Delaware Riverkeeper Network v. Fed. Energy Reg. Comm'n, 45 F.4th 104 (D.C. Cir. 2022)

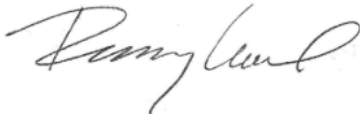
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brit Ebeling".

Brittany Ebeling
Executive Director, Berkshire Environmental Action Team

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melanie McCarthy".

Melanie McCarthy
Deputy Director, Berkshire Environmental Action Team

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Wessel".

Rosemary Wessel
Program Director, No Fracked Gas in Mass
A program of Berkshire Environmental Action Team

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Geller".

Samuel Geller, Intern
Berkshire Environmental Action Team

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