



DC Public Service Commission Community Hearings on FC 1179

Testimony of Claire Mills, DC Campaigns Manager for Chesapeake Climate Action Network June 17, 2025

Good evening Chairman Thompson and Commissioners Trabue and Beverly,

Thank you for holding this hearing to hear from community members. My name is Claire Mills and today I am testifying on behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network as our DC Campaigns Manager. I am also a tenant in Ward 1 that pays a monthly bill to Washington Gas.

Commissioners, please stand by your own order from a year ago and reject Washington Gas's proposal for the next phase of Project Pipes. For nearly two and a half years, Washington Gas has presented this Commission and the residents of the District with a series of false choices that have wasted our most precious resource: **time**. Over these two and half years, every hour we all have spent on the company's series of preposterous proposals is an hour we did not spend on crafting a genuine plan for the future of the District's energy system. So in decades, when I am still here to feel the actual consequences of this delay and you are not, I will remember the hours we all spent arguing with each other for the benefit of only Washington Gas's bottom line.

But with the time I have today, let me clear up a few of Washington Gas's false choices.

One: Washington Gas has made these proceedings about gas leaks, when in reality, the company will remain responsible for maintaining a gas system riddled with leaks, regardless of your decision in this case. If Washington Gas was serious about reducing gas leaks, the ongoing phase of Project Pipes would target actively leaking pipes, or at the very least, the cast and wrought iron pipes most likely to leak. Instead, they are replacing pipes installed in the last 25 years¹ at a cost almost 4 ½ times as high as the average past cost to replace service lines.² Instead, their work in 2023 resulted in only a 0.16% reduction in leaks.³ If Washington Gas was serious about reducing gas leaks, they would develop a real proposal, with actual project information, to address the only 7% of the leaks that account for 50% of

¹ [DC Government Objections and Comments on Washington Gas Light Company's Updated Project List](#); page 10.

² [DC Government Objections and Comments on Washington Gas Light Company's Updated Project List](#); page 4.

³ <https://dcpssc.org/Utility-Information/Natural-Gas/Natural-Gas-Leaks.aspx>

the total leaked gas.⁴ Instead, they ignore the requirements outlined in Order 22003⁵ and submit three paragraphs that hint at an actual plan,⁶ while blocking every data request and transparency measure they can. The bottom line is simple: Safe and reliable service is the company's obligation to the people of D.C., whether we pay our Project Pipes surcharge or not.

False choice two: Washington Gas claims we must spend even more ratepayer money to prevent the greenhouse gas they sell from becoming emissions, when obviously the most effective way to reduce methane emissions is to stop using methane. If Washington Gas was serious about mitigating their contribution to climate change, they would actually measure the methane emissions due to the use of their product. Instead, they calculate GHG emissions reductions achieved through accelerated pipe replacement so far with a formula – an effectively meaningless estimate. Instead, they fill their proposal with claims about future emission reductions once **all** leak-prone “vintage” materials have been retired or replaced.⁷ Instead, *even in those numbers* they focus only on Scope 1 emissions, ignoring the full cost to society of their product that leaks all the way from when it's fracked in Pennsylvania to the stove in my kitchen. Instead, they propose a new predictive JANA model but give insufficient information on the inputs, methodology, and outputs of that model.⁸ Instead, they propose a Customer Choice pilot program that creates the ultimate false choice and perpetuates the financial, climate, and consumer protection risks of an unmanaged gas transition.⁹ Instead, they waste two and half years of the precious time we have left to mitigate the climate crisis already changing weather in the District.

Although there are many more, let me cover one more false choice tonight: Washington Gas tries to tell us that Project Pipes is the best way to secure good union jobs in D.C., when in reality they are leaving us all to fight for scraps while their millionaire executives rank in the big bucks. Again, whether or not this project continues does not change the work that must be done to fix over a thousand leaks on Washington Gas's system. The miles of corroding cast iron must be addressed – through replacement, repair, or strategic decommissioning. Either way, there are decades of work to be done by union workers to keep our gas system safe as we transition to clean energy. If Washington Gas was serious about protecting its workers, they would work with all of us to manage that transition *for their workers*. And let me be clear, that transition has already begun – thousands of customers have already cut off their gas service in the District.¹⁰ If Washington Gas cared about its workers, the CEO of

⁴ [Strategic Electrification in Washington, D.C.](#), DOE report, at p. 4)

⁵ [Order 22003](#).

⁶ [Dissent of Commissioner Beverly to Order No. 22367](#)

⁷ [District SAFE application](#), Exhibit WG (A)-1 at p. 34.

⁸ [DCG Botwinick testimony](#), p. 10

⁹ [Sierra Club, Pierce testimony](#), p. 26

¹⁰ [ARDIR report, April 2025](#).

Alta Gas would not rake in over \$6 million dollars a year¹¹ from his office in Canada, while pipefitters breathe dangerous methane gas every day in their work. **The truth, the truth Washington Gas does not want us all to embrace, is we can have it all: good jobs, low or no gas bills, and an energy system that doesn't kill us or our planet.**

Commissioners, we are simply out of time. Our gas bills are due. The climate crisis is here. Ten years of this wildly over budget, ineffective program is enough. Two and half years of this merry-go-round with Washington Gas is enough. Reject this latest proposal, and lead us to a truly safe District.

¹¹ <https://simplywall.st/stocks/ca/utilities/tsx-ala/altagas-shares/management>