

TOWN OF WELLESLEY MASSACHUSETTS



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL • 525 WASHINGTON STREET • WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

**Wellesley Board of Selectmen Resolution
In Support of the Gas Safety, Municipal Coordination
and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Principles Contained in
An Act for Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy (FUTURE Act)
H.2849/S.1940**

WHEREAS: The Town of Wellesley is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and has adopted town-wide goals for reducing these emissions; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Wellesley has natural gas pipes that are more than 100 years old, with more than 250 gas leaks throughout the Town leaking methane into the atmosphere, including many leaks near homes, schools, playing fields, parks and pre-schools; and

WHEREAS: Gas leaks contain 95 percent methane, a greenhouse gas that is at least 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period; and

WHEREAS: Gas leaks are known to have health risks, particularly for young children, elderly people, and those vulnerable to respiratory illness; and

WHEREAS: Methane from gas leaks damages or kills Wellesley's street trees – trees which improve the quality of life of Wellesley residents; provide protection for the Town's residents against extreme heat and storm water flooding; sequester carbon dioxide, thereby decreasing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations; and increase property values and the Town's property tax base; and

WHEREAS: An aging gas infrastructure poses serious safety risks as evidenced by the explosions in the Merrimack Valley in September 2018; and

WHEREAS: Gas companies have not significantly reduced the number of gas leaks and the volume of methane emissions since the passage of Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2014, An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks, requiring them to classify and repair leaks, and ratepayers still pay for the lost gas; and

WHEREAS: [House H.2849/Senate S.1940](#), "An Act for Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy" (FUTURE Act) focuses on problems with the distribution of natural gas in the Commonwealth, addressing not only aging infrastructure and immediate safety concerns, but also creating a path forward by avoiding future stranded assets and permitting gas companies to distribute renewable thermal energy, including solar and geothermal; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will empower municipalities to have stronger, more transparent working relationships with the gas companies by improving coordination for gas leak repairs and strengthening safety standards; mandating that the gas companies notify the local fire chief and police department within an hour of finding a dangerous leak; requiring that the gas companies and the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) share maps, costs, and plans with municipalities and the public; and requiring that gas companies be audited annually for safety, performance, and leak reports; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will mandate that gas leaks within a specified distance of a school zone or building, or within the root zone of a tree, be fixed within 6 months;

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will give municipalities an effective voice in proceedings before the DPU by permitting municipalities to participate in adjudicatory hearings related to their service areas, and allowing individuals and municipalities to pursue remedies with the DPU as an alternative to the courts for claims of property damage incurred during gas company roadwork, as well as damage to trees from gas leaks; now therefore be it

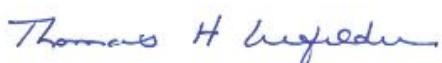
NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Wellesley Board of Selectmen support the above principles embodied in the FUTURE Act (H.2849/S.1940) and urge the Legislature to pass such a bill during the 2019-2020 session.



Marjorie R. Freiman, Chair



Elizabeth Sullivan Woods



Thomas H. Ulfelder, Vice Chair



Lise M. Olney



Jack Morgan, Secretary