

PUBLIC HEARING:  
ATTENDEES IDENTIFY ISSUES  
FOR PUC TO ADDRESS REGARDING  
THE INVESTIGATIONS INTO VGS PIPELINE DEPTH AND BLASTING PROCEDURES  
CASE NUMBERS 17-3550-INV AND 17-4630-INV

At a public hearing in Bristol held by the Public Utility Commission's ("PUC") Hearing Officer on November 21, 2017, regarding the PUC's investigations into the burial depth of Vermont Gas System's ("VGS") new pipeline and the blasting procedures used during construction of the VGS pipeline, which are being reviewed in case 17-3550-INV and case 17-4630-INV, respectively, of the approximately 50 attendees, 22 provide public comments expressing the following concerns:

1. The investigation into the burial depth of the pipeline differs from the PUC's other investigations into VGS's construction of the pipeline because it not only results in a loss of trust in VGS but also creates fear as to the safety of the pipeline, especially for those people who live near the pipeline. Until that fear can be overcome by reliable facts, gas should not be allowed to flow through the pipeline.
2. When the Commission was considering approval of the pipeline, VGS assured the public and the Commission that the pipeline would exceed federal safety standards. VGS did not achieve that high standard and there is no certainty that the new pipeline is safe.
3. VGS's failure to bury the pipeline as it promised was not detected by the Vermont Department of Public Service ("DPS") or the PUC but by local concerned citizens. VGS would not have "self-reported" by requesting a non-substantial change determination if local citizens had not discovered the pipeline's shallow burial depth.
4. The State cannot effectively oversee the safety of the pipeline. The DPS failed to exercise due diligence in overseeing the safety of pipeline construction. The DPS cannot be trusted to assess safety now. The Commission should hire an independent third-party consultant, paid for by VGS, to assess the safety of the pipeline.
5. VGS's later inspection of the pipeline should not be trusted and is insufficient to resolve safety concerns. VGS's track record, including its failure to report the shallow burial depth until six months after the work was done and gas was flowing in the pipeline, does not support the credibility of VGS's certification of pipeline safety.
6. VGS could not have properly buried the pipeline in the area photographed by the public in just one day. There were not enough equipment or hours in a day.
7. VGS's root-cause analysis states only that swampy conditions caused the shallow burial depth. The analysis fails to address the lack of supervision of the pipeline crews and how the VGS

decision was made to bury the pipeline at less than required depths and not report it until after the pipeline was completed and the gas was flowing.

8. There have been multiple gas pipeline accidents around the country and this fact should have shaped VGS's approach to the construction of the pipeline in Vermont and the PUC's oversight of that construction.
9. Civil penalties alone are insufficient to punish VGS for its failure to build the pipeline as promised. VGS should shut down the pipeline and apologize for violating the public's trust and placing people's lives in danger.