



Comments: Ref# W16-4600, Spectra's Proposed Compressor Station in North Weymouth

My name is Linda J. DiAngelo, President of the Back River Watershed Association and a North Weymouth resident of 57 years. The Weymouth Back River is a sub-basin of the Boston Harbor Basin and located largely in the coastal communities of Weymouth and Hingham, Massachusetts and flows into the Weymouth Fore River, the site of Spectra's proposed compressor station.

The Weymouth Back River is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and its waters merge directly with the waters of the Weymouth Fore River. The coastal resources that are part of the estuaries at Fore River Basin and the Back River contain numerous acres of wide salt marsh, several salt ponds that are vital links to the marine food web and ecosystem. In addition to productive clam flats, nurseries and feeding areas for a wide variety of finfish, finfish critical to supporting Massachusetts larger fishing industries, these valuable coastal resources also support a variety of significant wildlife. Today, these estuaries are the breeding and feeding habitat for 150 species of birds, some of which are rare and endangered. For instance, the American Bald Eagle has been sighted in both the Fore River and Back River in recent years, and there is a variety of significant wildlife that is supported throughout this shared coastal resource.

These coastal resource areas are significant to flood control, the prevention of storm damage, the protection of land containing shellfish, and fisheries; public interests including protection of ground water as defined in the Wetlands Protection Act {M.G.L.c.131,s.40;310 CMR 10.00 et seq.} The Weymouth Back River is a highly productive estuary and includes Herring Brook which supports one of the Commonwealth's most productive herring runs and provides annual passage of herring to Whitman's Pond for over 450 thousand alewives and also habitat for Rainbow Smelt and American eel.

The Fore River estuary, which includes coastal waters of Quincy's Germaine Town, Hough's Neck, North Weymouth, and continues into Weymouth Landing, and Braintree's Monatikquot River, also provides annual passage of herring from the Fore River into the Monatikquot River. Officials and volunteers in these communities are currently working together to restore and increase fish production and daylight areas for their passage. This ongoing effort by both local Officials and volunteers is part of an overall effort to restore our local fisheries and wildlife that are a significant part of our economy, culture, history, and our natural heritage. The good will and hard work of active citizens and our local officials for over fifty years to restore, preserve, protect, and promote our beautiful rivers and coastal areas, have resulted in healthy ecosystems and ensure the preservation of these important estuaries as protein producing resources and provide the public with passive recreation for future generations.

The history of the Quincy Shipyard during the tumultuous period of WWII, and the necessity to create the Designated Port Area at the Fore River does not legitimize a water dependent use for a gas compressor station at the Fore River Bridge site in North Weymouth on filled tidelands. Since Spectra Energy has publicly stated they plan to acquire 16.2 acres of land owned by Calpine Energy, which includes the conservation land parcel at King's Cove, which the Fore River Watershed Association and the Town of Weymouth received through mitigation of the Calpine Power Plant,

The Back River Watershed Association is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization organized to preserve, protect, and promote the Back River and its watershed in Weymouth, Hingham, and parts of Abington, Rockland & Braintree.

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for the exact purpose; to preserve as an open space a public park for passive recreation use only. Why should our community loose this right to passive recreation? We have fought and won for the right to enjoy this coastal resource providing fishing, hiking, walking, jogging, picnicking, and bicycling. The conservation restriction on this parcel would require a MEPA threshold if Spectra acquires this land by Calpine by eminent domain after Spectra receives a certificate of public convenience and necessity by FERC. It is a fact that the proposal of the Spectra Energy Corporation to construct a 7,700 horsepower compressor station at the Fore River Bridge site, in their October 22, 2016 application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, {FERC} is in their best economic interests for their profits and convenience. This is not environment justice when Spectra Energy can use other less densely populated sites that are not water dependent. The contradiction in Spectra's proposal is that they insist that the compressor station qualifies as an "ancillary water dependent" use when in fact they evaluated viable inland alternatives and have sited some of these alternative site locations for the proposed project in Holbrook or Franklin Massachusetts, areas not on water, therefore demonstrating the fact that the compressor station is not a water dependent use project. In addition the vast majority of their existing compressor stations are nowhere near water, let alone a valuable "Designated Port Area" like the Weymouth Fore River. Spectra Energy's only reason for not choosing one of the viable alternative sites is purely economics, and economics must never take president over our precious natural resources or public health.

It is also true that the 4.19, mile gas pipeline extension part of this project is actually the same project and would more than double the capacity of the compressor station by adding an additional 10,320 horsepower unit as well. These facts are clear and this project is not a water dependent project according to Chapter 91 Waterways Regulation 310 CMR 9.12 :{ c} 1. 2. Determination of Water-Dependency.

It is clear that the Environmental Impact Report, EIR needs to be done at the Fore River Bridge site as one project. Spectra has filed documents with federal regulators regarding its pipeline expansion through its Access Northeast project that refers to the proposed compressor station as existing. The fact is that the compressor station is neither existing, constructed, permitted, nor approved. The proposed compressor station cannot be separated from the proposed pipeline expansion under Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

We are an astute, involved South Shore Community with deep concerns about our present and future; committed with a focused vision for impacts on our environment, public safety, public health, and the prosperity for the common good on our proud South Shore Community. We are grateful for the leadership of our dedicated public officials from Weymouth, Quincy, and Braintree who stand with our citizens in opposition to these projects both the Access Northeast project and Atlantic Bridge Project since they are actually one project. The Back River Watershed Association concurs with the opinion of Weymouth Mayor Robert Hedlund and State Representative James Murphy that regulators consider the impacts of first building and then expanding any proposed compressor station in North Weymouth. Opposition to the proposed compressor station has been fierce during information meetings held by FERC and the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board with good reason. Hundreds of residents, business owners, and others have voiced and written comments to express concerns about noise, potential gas leaks, and toxins including methane, benzene, arsenic, and other volatile organic compounds that would not only negatively impact marine life, wetlands, wildlife, air quality, water quality, flood plains, it will be an additional and significant public health risk to the entire area. And, the DEP must take into consideration the fact that the EPA found

in 2012 that, "the Calpine Fore River plant is the 3rd highest direct source of emissions in MA."

The Back River Watershed Association concurs with Weymouth Mayor Hedlund that the Fore River site for the proposed compressor station is over industrialized and the facility has the potential to cause significant harm to the environment. Our community is already exposed to potential environmental risks from the commercial industries located at the Fore River site including: a gas and oil depot owned by Citgo, a chemical plant owned by Twin Rivers Technologies, power plants operated by Calpine Energy and Braintree Electric Light Department, a regional sewer pumping station owned by the Mass. Water Resources Authority, a sewage pelletizing plant operated by the MWRA, and a hazardous waste transfer/treatment facility operated by Clean Harbors.

Democratic Congressman Stephen Lynch expressed his concerns at the September 21, 2016 Weymouth Town Council Meeting, "Spectra Energy's plan to build a proposed compressor station near the Fore River Bridge is the worst possible site because of its potential safety risks and close proximity to families in North Weymouth". Spectra Energy must not be allowed to construct the proposed compressor station in North Weymouth putting a potential risk of 950 residential homes, condominiums, apartments, schools, churches, and businesses in a radius of two miles. The site, which has limited access in the event of a problem, sits less than 200 yards from Route 3A and the Fore River Bride, a major commuter route. And, several times a week, fully loaded oil tankers pass through the narrow channel abutting the proposed site. A catastrophe waiting to happen.

The Back River Watershed Association also agrees with Weymouth Town Councilor District 1 Rebecca Haugh that "Weymouth is on the right path with trying to prevent the proposed compressor station and pipeline from being built in the Fore River channel". The Back River Watershed Association acknowledges that commitment and wisdom of the Weymouth Town Council along with our friends and neighbors in our fight to oppose this project.

1. Spectra is stretching the intent of the regulations by insisting that their proposed compressor station is an ancillary water dependent use. In doing so they are jeopardizing the health and wellbeing of our fragile costal resources and the thousands of residents that reside within a two mile radius of the site. We, the public, have done as much as we can to stop this from happening. What we need now is the DEP to stand with us and fulfill its important mission, which includes preserving Massachusetts wetlands and coastal resources and protecting the health of the good citizens of Massachusetts by denying Spectra's application.

In closing I would like to offer my personal remarks about the ever increasing numbers of North Weymouth residents in the Fore River Bridge area that have or are currently fighting lung cancer, bone cancer, brain cancer, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and asthma. Many of these individuals are young people who have never smoked cigarettes and have led good lives. It is time to answer the question why should we here in North Weymouth be made to live with another public health risk, environmental risk or public safety risk?

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. DiAngelo
President, Back River Watershed Association
lucyblue@comcast.net



781-337-8085