

## Washington Gas's PROJECTpipes is Irresponsible Spending

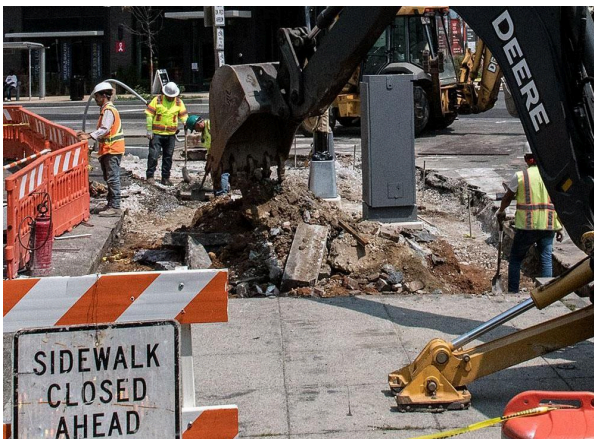
Piping methane gas into our homes and workplaces increases the energy bills we pay, pollutes the air we breathe, and fuels the climate crisis here in DC and around the world.

PROJECTpipes is Washington Gas Light Company's District-wide 40-year accelerated pipeline replacement project, for which they need the Public Service Commission's (PSC) approval.

Though Washington Gas markets it as a solution to increase safety and affordability, PROJECTpipes has ballooned into a multi-billion dollar shipwreck that will saddle vulnerable residents with high energy bills and exposure to health harming pollution for decades to come. The PSC already approved a \$123 million rate hike – nearly \$12 per ratepayer – to pay for a system that has failed to adequately reduce emissions or the most dangerous leaks in the first place, proving that **DC cannot achieve its ambitious climate goals unless we move off the outdated gas system and embrace the transition to electrified buildings.**

### Unchecked spending by Washington Gas to renew DC's outdated methane gas system is worsening an affordability crisis

- PROJECTpipes, Washington Gas's program to replace the city's aging gas system, is projected to cost more than \$12 billion, driving up gas rates for hundreds of thousands of gas customers. Based on the current number of DC gas customers.
- As the number of customers served by the gas system shrinks, remaining customers who do not have the means to electrify, including renters and low-income residents, will face crushingly high gas bills to pay back the cost of spending made by Washington Gas today. **Low-income District residents and communities of color already face disproportionately high energy costs.**
- Studies suggest that when done correctly, home electrification can [save households hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars per month](#) on energy bills.



### Washington Gas is prioritizing profits over health & safety

- Burning methane gas piped by WGL into DC's homes and buildings contributes to **dangerous indoor air quality**, exposing DC residents to harmful carcinogens and putting their health at risk.
- Low-income communities and communities of color face a higher risk of health hazards from gas appliances as well as [a higher energy bill burden](#).
- Gas appliances also drive poor outdoor air quality across the District and contribute to the formation of smog.
- According to Washington Gas's [report](#) to PHMSA in 2023, over 87% of the 1,250+ leaks in the District were at hazardous levels, posing a severe and immediate threat to the city's residents.

## Washington Gas is perpetuating the climate crisis in DC

- According to the DC Office of the People's Counsel, Washington Gas has so far failed to [adequately reduce emissions](#) from its aging gas system (including the first 10-years of PROJECTpipes work). A [report by the DOEE](#) that found 3,346 leaks across the District, finding nearly 5 leaks in each mile of road surveyed.
- DC's aging gas system is responsible for at least a quarter of all emissions in DC, polluting our homes and leaking climate-warming methane directly into the atmosphere. **Methane is more than 80 times as powerful a greenhouse gas** than carbon dioxide in the 20 years after emission.
- **The District of Columbia cannot achieve its ambitious climate goals without ending its reliance on the gas system.** The District of Columbia has set a goal to reduce emissions 60% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2045.
- Electrification also builds resiliency. By shifting away from methane gas, we enhance our energy security and resilience against supply chain disruptions and price fluctuations. Relying on local renewable energy sources ensures a more stable and predictable energy future.

## District (un)SAFE is more of the same from Washington Gas

- In June 2024, the PSC [rejected](#) Washington Gas's PROJECTpipes phase 3 proposal and asked them to refile a proposal more in line with the District's climate commitments, thanks to pressure from DC residents and advocates.
- In September 2024, Washington Gas submitted the ["District SAFE" plan](#) – a \$215 million dollar plan that spends 43% more than any previous phase of PROJECTpipes on accelerated pipeline replacement.
- District (un)SAFE continues the same costly, ineffective work that has already been done for over 10 years in the District, and makes only minor changes to PROJECTpipes phase 3 without addressing the real threat: methane.
  - District (un)SAFE will use the JANA Lighthouse model to predict where service leaks will be and target those sites for projects, when an approach actually designed to stop dangerous gas leaks would focus on detecting and repairing real, existing leaks.
  - The plan also includes a "customer "choice" plan that gives customers the false choice of entirely electrifying their home within just one year or consenting to the Project Pipes construction on their property. But while Washington Gas will spend an [average of \\$35,000](#) of ratepayer funds per project to replace just the service line to a building, residents will receive absolutely no assistance with electrification.

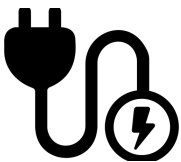
## What needs to happen to Stop PROJECTpipes and advance the energy transition?



**Community mobilization** - People power and public opposition to Washington Gas's PROJECTpipes plan is critical to influencing the Public Service Commission to deny WGL's District (un)SAFE proposal. We need help spreading the message about PROJECTpipes and building community support for the campaign. Reach out today to get involved.



**DC Council Intervention** - The DC Council must step up and protect consumers against Washington Gas's irresponsible \$12 billion pipeline replacement program. We can build healthier, more resilient communities with cleaner air and lower energy burdens by upgrading and transitioning entire neighborhoods to clean energy, but in order to achieve this future the DC Council must act today.



**Building electrification** - By prioritizing low-income and environmental justice communities for coordinated home upgrades, DC can ensure that the residents most at risk of the impacts of climate change are the first to reap the benefits of highly efficient, pollution-free homes. Upgrading DC homes with clean energy and all-electric appliances such as heat pumps can provide filtered, clean indoor air while also reducing climate pollution.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Claire Mills at [claire@chesapeakeclimate.org](mailto:claire@chesapeakeclimate.org)

Visit <https://ccanactionfund.org/stop-project-pipes/> for more info.