



## TOWN OF ARLINGTON

Massachusetts

### RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT NATIONAL GRID REPAIR SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT (SEI) GAS LEAKS BY JUNE 30, 2023

Whereas . . . Major methane gas leaks persist in Arlington owing to the failure of National Grid to make required repairs

Whereas . . . Methane gas leaks have detrimental effects on the environment, public health, safety, and welfare. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that atmospheric methane is now higher than at any time in at least 800,000 years and that methane is more than 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in terms of warming the climate.<sup>1</sup> Methane leaks are linked to many serious public health problems.<sup>2,3</sup> Most at risk are children, the elderly, and those with respiratory issues such as asthma, COPD, or lung damage from Covid-19. Methane leaks kill trees<sup>4</sup> by suffocating their root systems, compounding detrimental climate, heat island, and air quality effects, and costing the town money. Arlington has lost many Town trees to gas leaks.<sup>5</sup> The estimated annual cost of leaked methane (natural gas) billed to Arlington National Grid customers is \$117,541<sup>6</sup>

Whereas . . . Significant Environmental Impact (SEI) leaks, which spread over an area of 2,000 square feet or larger, are the largest and most harmful of methane gas leaks from the local gas distribution system. These leaks, also known as “super-emitters,” are estimated to be responsible for 50% of local methane leaks.<sup>7</sup> Per 2021 data, Arlington has 14 SEI leaks<sup>8</sup>

Whereas . . . Owing to work by Mothers Out Front, HEET, Gas Leaks Allies, and other climate organizations, gas utilities are now required to share SEI locations with the public. Arlington’s SEI leaks are in heavily trafficked, densely populated areas. They are across from the high school and in our residential neighborhoods. SEI leaks are found at 151 Lake Street (leaking since 2017), 259 Park Avenue (2017), 44 Jason Street (2011), 15 Russell Street (2006), 880 Massachusetts Avenue (2018), 325 Mystic Street (2012), 355 Mystic Street (2011), 106 Rhinecliff Street (2017), 864 Massachusetts Avenue (2020), 22 Sutherland Road (2017), 364 Gray Street (2014), 10 Joyce Road (2020), 58 Medford Street (2020), and 264 Massachusetts Avenue (2013).<sup>9</sup> These are presented in decreasing order of emissions

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/612638ab5e31f66d7ae8f810/t/615888c41ab1fe20dbe57188/1633192135840/Rolling+the+Dice.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/news/methane%E2%80%99s-links-respiratory-diseases-strengthens-case-its-rapid-reduction>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0269749119376717?via%3Dihub>

<sup>5</sup> [https://docs.google.com/document/d/147o-LHgbIWNM7dx93L29LVkWGRO7qkB7u\\_GZIOg3Od4/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/147o-LHgbIWNM7dx93L29LVkWGRO7qkB7u_GZIOg3Od4/edit)

<sup>6</sup> <https://heet.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73f7627766e64161a65c7518acb7eb9d>

<sup>7</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27023280/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://heet.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73f7627766e64161a65c7518acb7eb9d>

(note that the nonprofit HEET uses utility data for these gas leaks maps)

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*



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Whereas . . . National Grid is responsible for fixing SEI leaks within two years of their designation date, per the requirements for Uniform Natural Gas Leaks Classification (220 CMR 114, D.P.U. 16-31-C)

Whereas . . . It was only in 2021, after years of public pressure, that National Grid measured the area of Arlington's gas leaks and designated these leaks as SEIs.<sup>10</sup> Although most of our large volume gas leaks (SEIs) have only been classified as such since 2021 after being required by regulation,<sup>11</sup> many of these leaks were identified much earlier

Whereas . . . Due to their volume, SEI leaks emit a disproportionately large amount of methane, a greenhouse gas, into our atmosphere and Arlington is committed to reaching net zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050<sup>12</sup> and has declared a climate emergency

Whereas . . . The Town Manager's Gas Leaks Task Force was convened in 2016 to improve the dialogue with National Grid regarding the repair of gas leaks so that the various environmental and public health related impacts of gas leaks can be better mitigated and includes representation from the Department of Public Works (Bill Copithorne, Engineering and Tim Lecuivre, Tree Division), Sustainable Arlington (Brucie Moulton), the Tree Committee (Susan Stamps), and Mothers Out Front (Ann Boland and Ann Wright), and is staffed by the Department of Planning and Community Development (David Morgan, Environmental Planner)

Whereas . . . This resolution has been endorsed by the....

Be It Resolved . . . That the Select Board shall send by email and by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, a copy of this resolution together with a letter requesting that, within 30 days of date of said letter, National Grid commit to repair dates before June 30, 2023 for all of the above-listed SEIs and communicate those dates to the Select Board and Gas Leaks Task Force, to Amy Smith, Director NE Jurisdiction Gas Business Unit at National Grid and the following parties:

- Matthew H. Nelson, Chair of the Department of Public Utilities
- Representatives Sean Garballey and David Rogers
- Senator Cindy Friedman
- Directors of the Town of Arlington Department of Public Health, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Community Development
- Town of Arlington Public Information Officer Joan Roman
- Arlington Advocate, YourArlington, Arlington Patch, Arlington Community Media Inc., Boston Globe

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Uniform Natural Gas Leaks Classification (220 CMR 114, D.P.U. 16-31-C)

<sup>12</sup> Arlington Net Zero Action Plan, February, 2021

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/55139/637885684739670000>



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Respectfully submitted:

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