

OPPOSE SB565 (Sen. Surovell) and HB558 (Del. O'Quinn)

Topic: Natural gas utilities; defining and allowing for biogas infrastructure

Overview:

SB565 and HB558 are highly technical companions flawed in attempting to reduce methane pollution. As introduced, these bills are natural gas industry boondoggles. They lack consumer & environmental protections needed while empowering the gas industry to construct infrastructure with no required environmental benefit. We all agree we must reduce methane emissions, methane is even more toxic to the environment than CO₂, but SB565 and HB558 are flawed. **Legislators should oppose these bills.**

Reasons to Oppose and Explanations:

1. The bills allow concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) as locations where methane could be captured and inserted into pipelines as gas. This would allow gas companies to **propose connector pipelines** to reach site(s) closest to their existing lines. Since the CAFO could profit from the purchase of the gas, the bill incentivizes the production of methane at these sites and further incentivises CAFOs already horrendous management practices. There exists a profit motive, and both the gas company and the CAFO facility want nothing more. The waste lagoons associated with CAFOs are **doing significant damage**; both to the environment through leaching of the unlined ponds and to the communities in which they are located, which are almost always environmental justice communities. Environmental justice communities would be subjected to the continued **purposeful development of methane** for the purpose of feeding a gas industry pipeline(s).
2. The bills contain **no required environmental benefit** associated with the allowance of new gas infrastructure. The bill would allow the gas industry to propose connector lines to CAFOs, wastewater treatment sites, and landfills, construct them, and not even have to guarantee that methane emissions at the site will be reduced or that the overall project will reduce methane. **Gas companies get to build & prove nothing.**
3. The bills contain little to **no consumer protections** for the ratepayer of the gas companies. The gas industry is highjacking "emissions reductions" as the sole justification for tens of millions in increased ratepayer costs but refusing to prove in any way that the emissions went down due to the investment. It's greenwashing at its finest. The ratepayer is on the hook for the construction and maintenance, and they don't even get cleaner air.
4. The gas industry has **refused to budge** on the provisions of the bills. Environmental organizations delivered edits and suggested language to ensure environmental benefits are guaranteed from these projects, and they have refused to consider these baseline requirements.



Sierra Club Virginia Chapter

Connor Kish
connor.kish@sierraclub.org
www.sierraclub.org/virginia



Virginia Conservation Network

vcn@vcnva.org
(804) 644-0283
www.VCNVA.org