

(Fracked) Methane and Pipelines

MYTHS VS. FACTS

MYTH	FACT
Natural Gas is a clean fuel.	“Natural Gas” is a euphemistic term for fracked methane. Hydraulic Fracturing, or fracking, adds a toxic soup of chemical to the drilling slurry, and the shale gas itself contains radioactive elements. Carbon dioxide (CO ₂) and methane (CH ₄) are released during the energy intensive extraction process.
Natural Gas is better for the environment than other fossil fuels.	Drilling for methane and burning it for electrical power and heating produce at least as much damaging greenhouse gases as coal and oil. Burning gas emits less carbon dioxide than burning coal or oil, but methane is 86 times stronger than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere measured over 20 years.
Natural Gas will be less expensive to use than coal and oil.	Although the current glut of fracked gas on the market has depressed prices, various voices caution that increased dependence on fracked gas, as well as export, will cause prices to rise. The energy utility companies have succeeded in passing the costs of pipeline infrastructure on to ratepayers...
Using gas will be a “bridge fuel” until the infrastructure for renewable power is built.	The increased fracked methane that multiple, massive new and expanded pipeline projects will bring into and across the region is not needed here. Implementing greater efficiencies, including but not limited to sealing leaks in pipelines, have the potential to meet future energy need increases, without building any new pipeline.
Leaking methane is a figment of environmentalist’s imaginations.	Research from Harvard in 2015 showed that pipelines leak at a rate of about 2.7%, and Cornell biogeochemist Robert Howarth published a review in 2014 demonstrating that approximately 5% of all methane that is fracked escapes into the atmosphere before it reaches its destination. Actual measurements taken by planes flying directly over wells and fracking fields found much higher rates of methane gas leakage.
Pipeline expansions are necessary to provide adequate methane supply in winter.	Investing billions of dollars for peak use events is economically wasteful. Reducing demand is the smart way to manage peak use. The projections for needed gas are vastly overestimated. The truth is that the gas industry intends to export methane overseas where greater profits can be obtained.
Exporting gas will be good for the United States.	In October 2014, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) released a report stating “increased LNG exports lead to increased natural gas prices”, increased consumer costs for natural gas and electricity, and increased overall carbon dioxide emissions and energy expenditures
Expanded natural gas pipelines will bring us closer to energy independence.	The current rush to build billion dollar pipeline projects is motivated by the fear of impending regulation that could impinge on the Marcellus Shale gas boom. Another fear is how long this boom will last, conservatively estimated at 20 years. The industry is motivated to get as much fracked gas out of the ground as quickly as possible, at the highest possible profit. This energy plan is anything but enduring and sustainable.