
Regulation on *Reducing Methane Emissions from Natural Gas Distribution Mains and Services*

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ONE Future Methane and Climate Strategies Event

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Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) of 2008

Section 3(d):

“The department shall promulgate regulations establishing a desired level of declining annual aggregate emission limits for sources or categories of sources that emit greenhouse gas emissions.”

Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision

“...this court concluded that the plain language of [GWSA, Section 3(d)] requires the department to promulgate regulations that address multiple sources or categories of sources of greenhouse gas emissions, impose a limit on such emissions that may be released, limit the aggregate greenhouse gas emissions that are released from each group of regulated sources or categories of sources, set greenhouse gas emissions limits for each year, and set limits that decline on an annual basis.”

May 17, 2016

Governor's Executive Order 569

“The Department of Environmental Protection shall promulgate final regulations that satisfy the mandate of Section 3(d) of [GWSA] by August 11, 2017, having designed such regulations to ensure that the Commonwealth meets the 2020 statewide emissions limit mandated by the GWSA....The Department of Environmental Protection shall:

...consider limits on emissions from, among other sources or categories of sources, the following: (i) leaks from the natural gas distribution system...”

September 16, 2016

310 CMR 7.73 *Reducing Methane Emissions from Natural Gas Distribution Mains and Services*

- Promulgated August 11, 2017
- Applies to every Massachusetts gas operator with a Gas System Enhancement Plan (GSEP)
- GSEPs are annual plans to repair or replace aging or leaking natural gas infrastructure, overseen by the MA Department of Public Utilities
- Applies to gas distribution mains and service lines
- Establishes maximum annual methane emissions for each gas operator with a GSEP and an aggregate cap
- Establishes declining emissions from 2018 to 2019, and from 2019 to 2020



Regulated Entities

- Boston Gas Company d/b/a National Grid
- Colonial Gas Company d/b/a National Grid
- Bay State Gas Company d/b/a Columbia Gas of Massachusetts
- Berkshire Gas Company
- Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil
- New England Natural Gas Company Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities
- NSTAR Gas Company d/b/a Eversource Energy

Methane Emissions Limits

Maximum Annual CH₄ Emissions Limits – for each gas operator with a GSEP	
Calendar Year	Maximum Allowable CH₄ Emissions (metric tons of CO₂e)
2018	X
2019	Y
2020	Z

	metric tons of CO₂e		
Calendar Year	Sum of 6 gas operators Maximum Allowable CH₄ Emissions	CH₄ Emissions Set-aside	Maximum Annual Aggregate CH₄ Emissions Limit
2018	187,491	40,417	227,908
2019	178,582	39,972	218,554
2020	169,320	39,509	208,829



Key Features

- Requires annual reporting by the gas operators
- Requires MassDEP to complete a program review by December 31, 2020 “to determine whether the program should be amended or extended. This review shall evaluate whether to require the use of feasible technologies to detect and quantify gas leaks and any other information relevant to review of the program.”
- Companion to MA DPU regulation of grade 3 leaks with a “significant environmental impact”
 - Required by Chapter 188, Section 13 of the Acts of 2016

Fact Sheet:

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/08/bab/3dfs-methane.pdf>

310 CMR 7.73 Regulation in:

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/02/13/310cmr07.pdf>

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