

The Honorable Bob Latta,
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Energy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

June 17, 2026

Chairman Latta, Members of the Subcommittee on Energy,

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on March 17th at the hearing entitled “Winter Storm Fern: Lessons: Supplying Reliable Power to Meet Peak Demand.”

Below you will find my response to your additional question for the record.

The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)

- 1. It is no secret that the Northeastern states have limited natural gas pipeline capacity. This is largely a result of state policies that attack fossil fuels, and frivolous litigation from environmentalists. What is the practical effect of limited natural gas capacity into the Northeast, particularly during a weather event like Winter Storm Fern?**

Answer: As you note, the Northeast, and New England specifically, is significantly pipeline constrained. Throughout the year this constraint creates a number of challenges, which are exacerbated during periods of peak demand, including those caused by a weather event like Winter Storm Fern. The challenges can broadly be categorized into three categories: 1) affordability, 2) reliability, and 3) emissions. I will explore each of these more, below.

- 1) Affordability Impacts of Constraints: The region’s pipeline constraints have led to the Northeast, and New England specifically, paying some of the highest energy prices in the country. Despite the region’s proximity to the prolific Marcellus Shale and Appalachian Basin, New England’s energy and gas prices are often far higher than prices the rest of the country pays. As the pipelines serving the region reach their capacity, incremental energy demand must be met by paying higher spot prices. Often this demand is met via imported LNG, which according to EIA can contribute up to 35% of New England’s natural gas supply on peak demand days. LNG is a global commodity and therefore its price is influenced by both domestic and international events. Further, because gas is

contracted by LDCs to serve their customers' heating demand, electric generators are forced to turn to other fuels, such as oil, pushing electric sector prices even higher. This dynamic was on display during Fern when prices in New England were significantly higher than in other parts of the country that were also experiencing colder weather and increased demand. According to Natural Gas Intel, as demand increased during the week ending January 30th spot gas prices quickly rose. The pipelines serving New England saw record prices including the Algonquin Citygate, which serves the Boston area, surging to \$122.57 on January 26. Comparatively, Henry Hub, increased to only \$30.56 as frigid temperatures drove demand higher further south. Power prices followed gas higher. New England real-time electric power prices spiked to \$400–700/MWh on Sunday February 1st, according to market monitor TechStock2, reflecting the region's reliance on high-priced marginal generation during periods of peak demand. These increased costs ultimately get passed onto consumers in the commodity portion of their utility bill.

- 2) Reliability Impacts of Constraints: Access to natural gas is absolutely essential for both home heating reliability and electric reliability in the Northeast. Across the Northeast, natural gas continues to be the most popular fuel for home heating¹, including in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. During weather events like Winter Storm Fern, any loss of access to gas can quickly become a matter of life or death in cold New England winters. With interstate pipelines at their maximum output, LDCs were forced to turn to both imported LNG and on system storage to meet the demand during Fern. Simultaneously, ISO-NE and the New York ISO are among the most natural gas dependent electric grids in the country. However, as electric generators generally do not hold firm transportation entitlements, they are exposed to gas supply curtailment during periods of peak demand. Many power plants have dual fuel capabilities and switch to oil when natural gas is unavailable, which increases local emissions and also must be replenished during extended cold periods. Because of this, a recent study conducted for the NPCC found that “extreme cold weather conditions lasting longer than the three-day periods modeled in this study could add additional stress to the network of gas pipeline and storage and oil storage infrastructure in New York and New England, thereby heightening electric reliability challenges if oil inventory cannot be replenished on a timely basis.”² The study also noted that these constraints mean that during periods of peak demand, gas would be unable to support the grid in the case of other electric side challenges.
- 3) Emissions Impacts of Constraints: According to ISO-NE, “The biggest contributor [to the region's electric sector emissions reductions] has been the region's shift to lower-emitting, highly efficient natural-gas-fired generation.”³ During Fern, oil generation surged from a marginal resource to approximately 35% of New England's power supply. At periods of the highest demand, the region even had to rely on burning trash and

¹ [Northeast Gas Association, *The Pipeline*, heating Fuel Source by State](#)

² [Northeast Power Coordinating Council, NPCC Northeast Gas/Electric System Study Summary Report \(January 3, 2025\)](#)

³ [ISO-New England, “Air Emissions”](#)



wood.⁴ This has immediate impacts on air emissions in the region – impacts that could be avoided if more natural gas were available. Pipeline constraints also create upstream emissions impacts by increasing reliance on delivered fuels transported by truck and other transportation modes. Because transportation is itself a significant source of emissions, replacing pipeline-delivered natural gas with trucked fuel supplies adds emissions that would otherwise be largely avoided.

Thank you,

José Costa,
President and CEO
Northeast Gas Association

⁴ [U.S. Department of Energy, FACT SHEET: Energy Department Prevented Blackouts & Saved American Lives During Winter Storms](#)

