November 6, 2026

Cape Cod Commission
3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630

Re: Support for Algonquin Pipeline Relocation - DRI 25012, Bourne

Dear Members of the Cape Cod Commission:

On behalf of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, I urge the Commission to approve the Algonquin Pipeline Relocation, subject to appropriate environmental, safety, and transparency conditions. This is not a discretionary utility project conceived independently of the Cape Cod Bridges Program. The two existing gas mains are supported by bridges that must be removed, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the lines must be relocated under either a replacement or major-rehabilitation scenario. Timely relocation is therefore a prerequisite to replacing the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges while maintaining essential energy service to existing Cape Cod customers.

A Required Part of Bridge Replacement
The Sagamore Bridge replacement is funded and in procurement, and the utility relocation schedule targets turnover of the bridge site in 2028. The proposed replacement bridges are intended to preserve the existing two through lanes in each direction, with modern shoulders and auxiliary entrance and exit lanes to improve safety and traffic operations. MassDOT's environmental review does not anticipate a significant increase in trips caused by the replacement. This is fundamentally a safety, reliability, and continuity project - not the creation of a new access point to undeveloped land.

The Cost of Delay Is Documented
The Cape Cod Commission's own bridge-closure economic analysis demonstrates what is at risk. A major-rehabilitation scenario involving a six-month closure of one bridge and sixteen months of lane restrictions was estimated to impose $530 million to $661 million in traveler-delay costs, reduce tourism spending by as much as $327 million, and eliminate up to 2,600 jobs. An unplanned closure lasting two to five years was estimated to produce $4.6 billion to $10 billion in traveler-delay costs, reduce tourism spending by as much as $1.4 billion, and eliminate up to 11,200 jobs. Those impacts would extend well beyond tourism to workforce access, freight, health care, emergency response, municipal services, and the daily lives of Cape Cod residents.

Infrastructure Neglect Is Not Growth or Climate Policy
Cape Cod has already experienced the consequences of trying to manage growth by withholding infrastructure. During the region's residential building boom, sewer investments were resisted in part because they were viewed as growth-inducing. The homes were built anyway, relying on septic systems that now contribute most of the controllable nitrogen entering Cape Cod's coastal waters. The result is a multibillion-dollar wastewater obligation. We should not repeat that mistake by treating obsolete bridges or bridge-mounted utility lines as tools for controlling visitation, development, or energy policy. Growth should be governed directly through zoning, conservation, environmental regulation and climate policy—not indirectly by making Cape Cod more congested, unreliable, polluted or difficult to live on. Infrastructure neglect does not stop growth; it simply ensures that whatever growth occurs is more damaging and more expensive.

Address Capacity Concerns Directly
Support for the required relocation does not amount to an endorsement of unlimited future natural gas expansion. The proposed pipe's diameter and operating pressure have raised legitimate questions about potential delivery capability. Those questions call for evidence and enforceable oversight, not obstruction of the bridge program. Within its jurisdiction, the Commission should approve the relocation while requiring or requesting that the responsible agencies and applicant:

1. Provide a clear, independently reviewable comparison of the existing and proposed systems' delivery capability using consistent pressure, demand, and operating assumptions.
2. Explain why the proposed diameter and pressure are necessary to maintain current service and offset the engineering effects of the new underground alignment.
3. Implement strong construction, groundwater, methane-leak detection, emergency-response, restoration, and decommissioning requirements.
4. Ensure that any future proposal for additional firm capacity or materially expanded gas service receives separate review under applicable FERC, DPU, and Massachusetts climate requirements rather than being treated as implicitly authorized by this relocation.

Requested Action
The choice before the Commission is not between this project and the immediate elimination of natural gas use on Cape Cod. It is whether a required utility relocation will proceed safely, transparently, and on a schedule that allows the Commonwealth to replace two obsolete bridges. Denying or unnecessarily delaying the relocation would not eliminate existing gas demand. It would jeopardize the bridge schedule, increase public cost, and expose residents, workers, businesses, and visitors to risks that the replacement program is intended to resolve.

The Cape Cod Chamber therefore respectfully urges the Commission to approve DRI 25012 promptly, with appropriate conditions addressing the project's direct environmental impacts and transparency regarding capacity. Essential infrastructure, environmental protection, and climate accountability can and should be advanced together.

Sincerely,



Paul Niedzwiecki, President and CEO
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce