

STATE OF NEW YORK

656

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 9, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. RODRIGUEZ -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to requiring gas corporations to file a plan addressing aging or leaking pipelines within their service territory

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section
2 68-b to read as follows:

3 § 68-b. Aging or leaking pipelines. 1. Definitions. For the purposes
4 of this section, the following words, shall, unless the context clearly
5 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

6 (a) "Customer" shall mean a retail customer receiving end use service
7 from a gas corporation.

8 (b) "Eligible infrastructure replacement" shall mean a replacement or
9 an improvement of existing pipeline of gas corporation that: (i) is
10 performed on or after January first, two thousand eighteen; (ii) is
11 designed to improve public safety and/or infrastructure reliability;
12 (iii) does not increase the revenue of a gas corporation by connecting
13 an improvement or installing new pipeline for the principal purpose of
14 serving new customers; (iv) reduces, or has the potential to reduce,
15 lost and unaccounted for gas through a reduction in gas leaks; and (v)
16 is not included in the approved rate base of the gas corporation as
17 determined in the gas corporation's most recent approved rate plan.

18 (c) "Gas infrastructure rate plan" shall mean a pipeline replacement
19 program construction plan that a gas corporation files with the commis-
20 sion pursuant to subdivision two of this section.

21 (d) "Project" shall mean an eligible pipeline replacement project
22 proposed by a gas corporation in a plan filed under this section.

23 2. A gas corporation shall file with the commission a plan to address
24 aging or leaking pipeline within its respective service territory in the

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD04838-01-7

1 interest of public safety and reducing lost and unaccounted for gas
2 through a reduction in gas leaks. The filing of the plan required pursu-
3 ant to this subdivision shall be submitted no later than the thirty-
4 first of October, two thousand eighteen.

5 3. (a) Any plan filed with the commission shall include, but not be
6 limited to: (i) eligible pipeline replacement of mains, service lines,
7 metering sets, and other ancillary facilities composed of non-cathodi-
8 cally protected steel, cast iron, wrought iron, and any other material
9 the commission deems leak-prone, prioritized to implement the federal
10 gas distribution pipeline integrity management plan annually submitted
11 to the commission and consistent with subpart P of 49 C.F.R. part 192;
12 (ii) an anticipated timeline for the completion of each project; (iii)
13 the estimated cost of each project; (iv) rate change requests; (v) a
14 description of customer costs and benefits under the plan; and (vi) any
15 other information the department considers necessary to evaluate the
16 plan.

17 (b) Upon the filing of the plan required under this section, a gas
18 corporation shall include a timeline for removing all leak-prone pipe-
19 line on an accelerated basis, specifying an annual replacement pace and
20 program end date with a target end date of either: (i) not more than
21 twenty years; or (ii) a reasonable target end date considering the
22 allowable recovery cap established pursuant to subdivision six of this
23 section. The commission shall not approve a timeline as part of a plan
24 unless the allowable recovery cap established pursuant to subdivision
25 six of this section provides the gas corporation with a reasonable
26 opportunity to recover its expenditures related with removing all leak-
27 prone infrastructure and the accelerated basis set forth under the time-
28 line utilizing the cost recovery mechanism established pursuant to this
29 section. After filing the initial plan, a gas corporation shall, no
30 later than the thirty-first of October of each succeeding year, at annu-
31 al intervals, provide the commission with a summary of its replacement
32 progress to date, a summary of work to be completed during the subse-
33 quent year and any additional information the commission may require.
34 The commission may require a gas corporation to file an updated long-
35 term timeline as part of a plan if it alters the cap established pursu-
36 ant to subdivision six of this section.

37 4. If a gas corporation files a plan on or before October thirty-first
38 for the subsequent construction year, the commission shall review the
39 plan within six months. The plan shall be effective as of the date of
40 the filing, pending commission review. The commission may modify a plan
41 prior to approval at the request of a corporation or make other modifi-
42 cations to a plan as a condition of approval. The commission shall
43 consider the costs and benefits of the plan including, but not limited
44 to, ratepayer impact, with special consideration of customers receiving
45 assistance through the home energy assistance plan, reductions of lost
46 and unaccounted for gas through a reduction in gas leaks and improve-
47 ments to public safety. The commission shall give priority review and
48 give preliminary acceptance to plans specifically designed to address
49 leak-prone pipeline most immediately in need of replacement, based on
50 standards established by the commission.

51 5. If the commission determines a plan is in compliance with the
52 requirements of this section and would reasonably accelerate pipeline
53 replacements and provide benefits, the commission shall issue acceptance
54 in whole or in part. A gas corporation shall then be authorized to begin
55 recovery of the estimated costs of projects included in the plan begin-
56 ning on May first of the year following the initial filing and collect

1 any revenue requirement, including depreciation, property taxes and
2 return associated with the plan.

3 6. On or before May first of each year, a gas corporation shall file
4 final project documentation for projects completed in the prior year to
5 demonstrate substantial compliance with the plan approved pursuant to
6 subdivision five of this section and that all project costs were reason-
7 ably and prudently incurred. The commission shall investigate project
8 costs within six months of submission and shall approve and reconcile
9 the authorized rate factor, if necessary, upon a determination that the
10 costs were reasonable and prudent. Annual changes in the revenue
11 requirement eligible for recovery shall not exceed one-and-one half
12 percent of the gas corporation's most recent calendar year of total firm
13 revenues, including revenues attributable to transmission and distrib-
14 ution customers. Any revenue requirement approved by the commission in
15 excess of such cap may be deferred for recovery in the following year.

16 7. All rate change requests made to the commission pursuant to an
17 approved plan shall be filed annually on a fully reconciling basis,
18 subject to acceptance by the commission pursuant to subdivision five of
19 this section. The rate change included in a plan pursuant to subdivision
20 three of this section, reviewed pursuant to subdivision five of this
21 section and taking effect on May first pursuant to subdivision six of
22 this section shall be subject to review by the commission, to determine
23 whether the gas corporation has over-collected or under-collected its
24 requested rate adjustment with any such discrepancies reconciled on an
25 annual basis. If the commission determines that any of the costs were
26 not reasonably or prudently incurred by a gas corporation, the commis-
27 sion shall disallow the costs and direct the gas corporation to refund
28 the full value of the costs charged to customers with the appropriate
29 carrying charges on the over-collected amounts. If the commission deter-
30 mines that any of the costs were not in compliance with the approved
31 plan, the commission shall disallow the costs from the cost recovery
32 mechanism established under this section and shall direct the gas corpo-
33 ration to refund the full value of the costs charged to customers with
34 the appropriate carrying charges on the over-collected amounts.

35 8. The commission may promulgate any rules and regulations necessary
36 to effectuate the pipeline replacement program pursuant to this section.
37 The commission may discontinue the replacement program and require a gas
38 corporation to refund any costs charged to customers due to failure to
39 substantially comply with a plan or failure to reasonably and prudently
40 manage project costs.

41 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.