

STATE OF NEW YORK

3613

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 11, 2019

Introduced by Sen. COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications

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 twenty; (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.

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

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1 2. A gas corporation shall file with the commission a plan to address
2 aging or leaking pipeline within its respective service territory in the
3 interest of public safety and reducing lost and unaccounted for gas
4 through a reduction in gas leaks. The filing of the plan required pursu-
5 ant to this subdivision shall be submitted no later than the thirty-
6 first of October, two thousand twenty.

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

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

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

53 5. If the commission determines a plan is in compliance with the
54 requirements of this section and would reasonably accelerate pipeline
55 replacements and provide benefits, the commission shall issue acceptance
56 in whole or in part. A gas corporation shall then be authorized to begin

1 recovery of the estimated costs of projects included in the plan begin-
2 ning on May first of the year following the initial filing and collect
3 any revenue requirement, including depreciation, property taxes and
4 return associated with the plan.

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

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

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

43 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.