

BEFORE THE
VERMONT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Petition of Vermont Gas Systems, Inc., pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(i), for approval of an out-of-state renewable gas purchase contract with a term exceeding 5 years	Case No. 22-2230-PET
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DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CATHERINE BOCK

September 2, 2022

Exhibit CB-1 is Rhetoric vs. Reality: The Myth of “Renewable Natural Gas” for Building Decarbonization

Exhibit CB-2: Effects of Residential Gas Appliances on Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality and Public Health in California

Summary of Testimony

Catherine Bock, Naturopath, discusses the health issues associated with natural gas, and how this contract will contribute for further health problems.

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CATHERINE BOCK

Q1. Please state your name.

A1. My name is Catherine Bock.

Q2. Please describe your relevant education and professional experience.

A2. I have a BS in Biochemistry from Beloit College (Wisconsin). I pursued postgraduate studies at National University of Natural Medicine, Portland Oregon, earning an ND (doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine) in 1980. I was a licensed Naturopathic Doctor in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. I moved to Sweden in 1986, and was a primary family care provider. I earned an MPH (Masters in Public Health) at Nordic University in Gothenburg, Sweden. I was a practicing Naturopath until 2010 at which time I returned to the United States and retired. I maintained a career long interest in the effects of environmental pollutants on health

Q3. On whose behalf are you testifying in this case?

A3. I am testifying on behalf of myself as a concerned VGS customer.

Q4. Have you testified previously before the Vermont Public Utility Commission?

A4. No.

Q5. What is the purpose of your testimony?

A5. In addition to being skeptical about assertions that the proposed contract will reduce GHG emissions in Vermont, and to my concern about increases the contract will cause in my gas bill, I wish to register my

1 opposition to contributing to negative health effects caused by prolonging
2 the use of methane in general and by the use of landfill gas in particular.

3 **Q6. Please explain how you became interested in the health effects of**
4 **environmental pollutants?**

5 **A6.** My profession was to use lifestyle counseling and natural remedies to
6 prevent and heal disease. Patients came to me with a variety of conditions
7 such as allergy, arthritis, emotional issues, infertility, pain, and so on.
8 Many of these patients were older, and had given up on conventional
9 medicine. At the beginning of my career, it was gratifying to see that my
10 patients responded well to naturopathic therapies, but as time went by,
11 once-successful treatments, began to fail. This was true despite
12 improvements in patients' diet, increasing rest, and exercise, and being in
13 healthy personal relationships. Looking for an answer to this puzzle, I
14 returned to school to study public health and explore the effects of
15 environmental pollution. I gained insight into Multiple Chemical
16 Sensitivity, a syndrome, now widely recognized, that is attributed to
17 exposure to subtoxic levels of environmental pollutants. Consequently I
18 understood some of my non-responding patients, as cases of probable
19 MCS, where changing a job, or moving to a new residence alleviated
20 symptoms. In short, my observations throughout a thirty five year career,
21 while not in the form of strict case-controlled studies, nevertheless inform
22 my point of view. Exposure to common pollutants can have life-changing
23 negative effects on health.

24 **Q7. What are your health concerns about natural gas in general?**

25 **A7.** Natural gas used for heat or cooking produces combustion products that
26 reduce indoor air quality. (*Exhibit CB-2: Effects of Residential Gas*

1 *Appliances on Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality and Public Health in*
2 *California* <https://ucla.app.box.com/s/xyzt8jc1ixnetiv0269qe704wu0ihif7>)

3 **Q8. What are your concerns about the health effects of landfill gas?**

4 **A8.** The Seneca Meadows Landfill dumps millions of gallons of leachate into
5 local communities' water supplies and some reaching as far as Buffalo.
6 By now, I think everyone is well aware of how serious a health hazard
7 PFAS, a component of the leachate is.

8 **Q9. Does this conclude your testimony?**

9 **A9.** Yes, it does.
