

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2019

Press Contacts: Anna Baker, Executive Director
Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility
abaker@gbpsr.org, 617-868-3003

“The Weymouth compressor station represents a significant risk to human health.”

Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility Challenges State’s Health Impact Assessment

[Boston] — In response to the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) released last week by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health of the proposed natural gas compressor station in the Town of Weymouth, Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, an organization that represents the voice of physicians and health professionals on the gravest threats to human health, issued the following statement:

“As physicians and health professionals, we are astounded at the lack of scientific rigor of the health impact assessment (HIA) released by the State regarding the natural gas compressor station proposed to be built in Weymouth. We join the Advisory Committee to the HIA to refute this study and its conclusion.

The HIA is flawed and fails to protect residents’ health and their lives. Our greatest concerns include:

- **Air pollution.** The HIA finds existing elevated levels of dangerous air pollutants in Weymouth and acknowledges that the compressor station will increase these levels, but fails to conclude that this is a health risk.
- **Preexisting diseases.** The HIA finds that rates of diabetes, respiratory disease and cardiovascular disease in the Weymouth area are among the highest in the state. Many of these health conditions can be related to air pollution, yet the HIA concludes that there is no health risk to worsening air quality in this already-polluted community.
- **Environmental justice.** The surrounding area of Weymouth includes high numbers of school children, elderly, non-English speakers, chronically ill individuals, and people with low income levels. These communities are likely to be disproportionately impacted by air pollutants from the compressor station. The HIA fails to consider their special health risks.
- **Climate change.** Climate change, caused by the burning of fossil fuels, represents the greatest public health threat of the 21st century. Construction of further fossil fuel infrastructure is fundamentally at odds with the need to rapidly transition to less polluting and healthier sources of energy.
- **Public safety.** The HIA wholly disregards the public safety concerns related to potential fires and explosions at the proposed facility. Massachusetts recently experienced a public health and safety catastrophe related to natural gas infrastructure in the Merrimack Valley.

The HIA’s executive summary states as its conclusion that ‘no health impact’ is anticipated from construction of the Weymouth compressor station. As medical and public health professionals, we read the data and come

to a very different conclusion: **Multiple health impacts are in fact *likely* to occur if the compressor station is built.** We call on the State of Massachusetts to withhold permits for this compressor station. The Weymouth compressor station should not be built.”

###

About Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)

PSR is a nonprofit organization representing medical and health professionals and concerned citizens, with approximately 40,000 members and supporters and with chapters in major cities and medical schools throughout the United States. PSR has been working for more than 55 years to create a healthy, just and peaceful world for both present and future generations. Learn more about Greater Boston PSR at www.gbpsr.org.