



GREATER BOSTON PHYSICIANS
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CARING FOR OUR CLIMATE
PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR

December 10, 2018

Thomas McGrath, Chief
Massachusetts DEP Air Assessment Branch
Senator William X. Wall Experiment Station
37 Shattuck Street, Lawrence, MA 01843-1398
Thomas.McGrath@mass.gov

Dear Mr. McGrath,

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) is an advocacy organization of more than 50,000 health professionals. We are submitting this letter in response to the public comment period for the Massachusetts DEP's Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network and Annual Plan; our concern relates to air-quality monitoring in the Fore River Basin (Braintree, Quincy and Weymouth).

Greater Boston PSR has been a strong supporter of the health impact assessment (HIA) for the proposed natural gas compressor station in Weymouth and has followed the public process closely. In a November 7, 2018 letter to Massachusetts Department of Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Monica Bharel, we expressed our concern that residents of the Fore River basin experience elevated levels of coronary artery disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease relative to the state average, making them uniquely vulnerable to the health effects of additional air pollution from the proposed compressor station. We also pointed out that insufficient air quality data had been collected for the appropriate performance of the HIA.

With this letter, we ask the Massachusetts DEP to take the following steps to collect additional needed data on air quality in the Fore River basin:

1. Establish **a long-term air quality monitoring site in the Fore River basin** area, inside or within proximity to the port.
2. **Include nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) monitoring in the Fore River basin.** Regulatory modeling for the proposed Weymouth compressor station did not consider marine vessel emissions, nor are they represented at any existing monitoring sites. Marine vessel sources in and around the Fore River designated port area include marinas, ferries, tugs, and ocean vessels serving port area industries.
3. Conduct long-term **VOC and aldehyde testing (e.g., every six days)** to further evaluate these existing air quality problems, since elevated levels were identified as part of the health impact assessment.

As physicians and health professionals, we recognize that climate change is the greatest public health threat of the 21st century, and we further call on the Massachusetts DEP to oppose the construction of additional fossil fuel infrastructure as part of its mission to ensure clean air, land and water for residents of the Commonwealth.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MB3", is positioned above the name of the signatory.

Matt Bivens, MD
GBPSR Board Chair