



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

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September 11, 2019

President Mark Kempic
Bay State Gas Company d/b/a Columbia Gas of Massachusetts
4 Technology Drive, Suite 250
Westborough, MA 01581

RE: Chairman's Eleventh Set of Orders under G.L. c. 25, § 4B

Dear President Kempic,

Today, Bay State Gas d/b/a Columbia Gas of Massachusetts ("Columbia Gas") notified the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") about concerns regarding the work on two service lines, including one service line that Columbia Gas took out of service during the restoration efforts following the September 13, 2018 gas line event in Merrimack Valley. The restoration efforts in Merrimack Valley involved, among other things, abandoning 4,900 existing service lines ("abandoned services") and replacing them with new services that currently provide gas to customers. During the restoration, Columbia Gas disconnected the abandoned services from its distribution system such that they are no longer providing gas service.

While the abandoned services are not active and do not affect customers' current service lines or heat, the issues identified regarding the two abandoned services concern the Department and indicate violations of Department regulations. These issues will require inspections and potentially additional work to properly cap the abandoned lines. Out of an abundance of caution, we are requiring the actions identified below, the timely completion of which will lead to confidence that any public safety concerns are addressed. Columbia Gas stated that it expects to complete the initial phase of its quality control work on the abandoned services by November 16, 2019. The Department expects, however, that the company will prioritize this work and have it completed sooner.

To ensure continued oversight of ongoing restoration and recovery efforts, and under the powers granted to me by Governor Baker under section 4B of chapter 25 of the General Laws, I hereby issue the following orders to Columbia Gas, which I deem necessary to assure public safety and welfare through the priority restoration or continuing availability of gas service.

- Until further notice, Columbia Gas shall conduct leak surveillance that ensures public safety in all of the areas where the abandoned services are located and the company shall provide the Department with the results of this surveillance on a daily basis. Columbia Gas shall ensure that any work on or near abandoned services is conducted in consultation with municipalities and Dig Safe to ensure public safety.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department the address of abandoned services.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department the location of all Grade 1, 2, and 3 leaks, as of September 11, 2019, that are within a half a mile of abandoned services. Additionally, if the leak is on a main that was put into service during the Merrimack Valley restoration efforts, the company shall state whether that main was constructed using the insertion and/or open trench technique.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department detailed work plans identifying resources, timeline, and action items for the steps the company will take to assure the work it performed on the abandoned services is in compliance with Massachusetts and federal law. The initial phase of quality control work on the abandoned services shall be completed as expeditiously as possible.
- Once the work plans have been implemented, Columbia Gas shall provide the Department daily updates on the work that the company has completed.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department a communication plan intended for customers and municipalities regarding the abandoned services.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department a system overview map of the abandoned services. The map shall identify main and service pressures.
- Columbia Gas shall provide the Department with all records associated with the two abandoned services about which the company presented concerns to the Department.

If Columbia Gas of Massachusetts fails to carry out any of these orders, it may be assessed penalties up to \$1,000,000 per violation.

If you have any questions, please contact Pipeline Safety Division Director Rick Enright at 617-305-3703 or Richard.Enright@mass.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Matthew Nelson

Matthew Nelson
Chairman