

To: Portsmouth Town Council

From: Linda Ujifusa

Re: NGrid plans for Old Mill Lane LNG facility

Date: 3/16/2021

I have asked for National Grid (NGrid), Acadia Center and Navy representatives to present an update about the Old Mill Lane LNG facility to the town council and answer questions set forth below as well as other questions that may be raised by the public.

Background:

Constituents have expressed great concerns about the Old Mill Lane LNG facility and future gas infrastructure plans on Aquidneck Island. The decision-making process is complicated and not easy for the public to follow, in part because it involves so many potential decision-making entities - local, state and federal (Navy) - and there is little notice to the public about potential opportunities for review and comment.

At this point, NGrid has submitted proposals to the RI Public Utilities Commission (RIPUC) which consists of “two distinct regulatory bodies: a three-member [Commission \(Commission\)](#) and the [Division of Public Utilities and Carriers \(Division\)](#).” See RIPUC [website](#) and [RI PUC docket #5099](#). NGrid has also been discussing options with the Navy.

NGrid’s proposals to the RIPUC include:

- a) Requesting approval for \$4.9 million dollars (from the ratepayers) to study options expanding natural gas infrastructure on Aquidneck Island, including Navy property; and
- b) Proposing a “hybrid” to build 1) a new energy facility 2) miles of new gas mains and hundreds of new building connections enabled by the new energy facility, and 3) incremental investments in weatherization and electrification to offset the new gas growth.

These requests appear to reject the recommendations of the Portsmouth Town Council submitted on November 1, 2020, that essentially asked for a moratorium on new gas hookups and to act to reduce natural gas demand.

In addition, these requests are problematic for reasons set forth by Acadia Center in its [testimony to the RIPUC](#):

“This is an inefficient and imprudent use of ratepayer funds and seems designed primarily to further National Grid’s own financial interests because it allows the Company to build and rate base more gas infrastructure than it would to simply implement the demand reduction measures. The \$4.9 million requested in the FY2022 ISR plan to study a new and already controversial energy facility elsewhere on Aquidneck Island looks past obvious cost-effective demand reduction strategies and merely shifts valid safety concerns from one part of the community to another.”

Questions:

- 1) What are the current options being considered by NGrid for the OML LNG and construction of natural gas infrastructure on Aquidneck Island?
- 2) Has NGrid or Navy considered the effect on neighboring homes of moving the OML LNG to Navy property?
- 3) Why is NGrid proposing a \$4.9 million study and “hybrid” policy if the public goal is to lessen natural gas demand? That is, who is advocating for these and why?
- 4) Was Old Mill Lane called into service this winter? If so, during what period and for how long?
- 5) Why must Old Mill Lane be stood up for such long periods of time? During the January 2019 incident, National Grid dispatched portable LNG and was ready to inject gas into the system in approximately 10 hours. Since National Grid’s supply constraint only potentially arises during periods of extreme cold, could the Company simply monitor the weather and dispatch resources accordingly in a more temporary manner throughout the winter season? What are the pros and cons?
- 6) How will NGrid and Navy keep Portsmouth town council, staff and residents better informed about
 - a. its plans for OML LNG and infrastructure building on Aquidneck Island;
 - b. opportunities to comment or submit testimony about such plans; and
 - c. its responses to questions submitted by the public about such plans?