

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BRIAN WORRELL, BREADON, CULPEPPER,
FITZGERALD, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MURPHY, PEPÉN, AND SANTANA**



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON HIGH ENERGY COSTS AND PATHWAYS TO AN EQUITABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY-RESILIENT ENERGY TRANSITION IN BOSTON

WHEREAS, Boston's energy system is supported by a large gas pipeline network, funded for years by the Gas Safety Enhancement Program to encourage the replacement of broken and leaky pipes by gas and utility companies; *and*

WHEREAS, By the end of March 2026, National Grid reported 800 as of yet unrepaired leaks in Boston, making up a total of 544,000 square feet; *and*

WHEREAS, By some estimates it costs about \$7 million a mile to replace pipes and, in the volatile oil market amid war and other geopolitical stressors, the prices of gas and pipe replacement continue to rise, and are ultimately reflected in residents' increasingly higher utility bills; *and*

WHEREAS, In July of 2026, State Sen. Jamie Eldridge put forth an amendment to the Senate's energy affordability package (S 3143) that would have ended subsidies for gas line extensions, but the amendment was defeated, maintaining the lack of incentive for energy providers to explore more cost-effective alternatives; *and*

WHEREAS, The City must consider the risks of an energy system that relies on the finite resources of oil and gas, and investing significant funding in the replacement of pipes that will eventually become liabilities as their utility dies out while the costs of their replacement increases; *and*

WHEREAS, Reliance on a large gas system poses immediate and long-term consequences for the health of Boston's residents and its environmental resilience, as methane emissions from the burning and usage of gas are toxic to humans, and a significant cause of rising global temperatures and increased air pollutants, the latter of which resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths in Massachusetts in the year 2022; *and*

WHEREAS, The overinvestment in replacing and maintaining a large gas system will continue to result in disproportionate costs for low-income families for whom electrification remains unaffordable, and exacerbated health disparities for communities of color who are already at higher risk for asthma and other illness related to air pollutants; *and*

WHEREAS, As a necessary investment in the health and financial well-being of Boston's residents and its environmental and economic stability, the City should consider the sustainability, life-and-cost-savings of; alternative ways to addressing leaks in the gas system such as repairing rather than fully replacing pipes; transitioning off of a gas-dependent energy system and toward a more affordable, healthier and more environmentally resilient energy system, and creating pathways to the electrification of homes and facilities that are affordable and accessible for all of Boston's residents; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to address increasing energy costs, to develop a plan and cadence for reoccurring hearings around scheduled pipe repair projects to assess potential costs and impacts, and to consider pathways to an equitable and environmentally-resilient energy transition in Boston, and that members from the Environment Cabinet, the Streets Cabinet, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, representatives from natural gas and utilities companies, advocates in the energy and environmental justice space, and other interested parties and residents shall be invited to attend and testify.

Filed on: August 24, 2026