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# Springfield Regional Chamber endorses Kinder Morgan, Spectra gas pipeline projects



Jeffrey S. Ciuffreda, president of the Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce is seen at an editorial board meeting at The Republican last year. *(The Republican file)*



By [Jim Kinney | jkinney@repub.com](mailto:jkinney@repub.com)

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SPRINGFIELD - The **Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce** called Monday for more pipeline capacity bringing natural gas into the region.

Chamber President Jeffrey Ciuffreda said the consistent availability of reliably priced energy has supplanted health care as the top worry of area businesses. That goes especially for major manufacturers in Greater Springfield.

"It's clear that the energy needs won't be filled by solar, or wind or hydro alone," Ciuffreda said. "We will be supportive of all that. But we want to see more gas supply as well."

The Chamber is speaking out because Ciuffreda believes state lawmakers will come out with a comprehensive energy bill in the next few months. A stand-alone solar bill failed to gain traction late last year.

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## TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE

The chamber made little distinction between the controversial **Kinder Morgan pipeline project** in Berkshire and Franklin counties and the **Spectra Energy** project which would involve **the expansion of the existing Algonquin Gas Transmission pipeline** which passes mostly through Connecticut before heading northeast along the coast.

Spectra's **Access Northeast**, would be jointly developed by Eversource, National Grid and Spectra Energy.

Opposition to Kinder Morgan's Morgan's Northeast Energy Direct and **Connecticut expansion** projects includes landowners who would lose property to the rights of way and those opposed to building the pipelines through previously undeveloped territory.

Both pipeline projects would carry natural gas from the Marcellus shale lands of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia where fracking has led to a glut of natural gas.

The chamber's position paper makes no mention of the alternative routing of the Kinder Morgan project along the MassPike. **Kinder Morgan has reject that route as more expensive and requiring of more lateral lines through populated areas.**

Ciuffreda said in a written statement that the pipelines are needed to fight high energy costs in this part of New England.

"Energy is a critical issue for our members. While they acknowledge that regional investment in the transmission infrastructure has increased the reliability of our grid, they see that demand for natural gas continues to rise and the infrastructure is not in place to support such demand. This not only increases their already high costs of electricity but causes constraints on the infrastructure and supply. Combined, they tell us it significantly impeded their continued economic development and the economic development of our region."

The chamber's Board of Directors voted Monday to adopt a position that also calls for the state to push towards its green energy goals. The chamber said it will work to let local lawmakers know its position.

The chamber issued the following position statement:

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[Springfield Regional Chamber endorses Kinder Morgan, Spectra gas pipeline projects](#)

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[National Grid seeks Massachusetts DPU approval of gas pipeline capacity contracts](#)

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[Tennessee Gas seeks 'pre-condemnation' access for pipeline surveys as 408 Massachusetts landowners resist](#)

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[Environmental groups call for federal probe of agency that approves interstate natural gas pipelines](#)

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[Pipeline marchers make 3-day trek from Northfield to Plainfield](#)

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"The Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce through its members has long identified the high, and increasing cost of energy as a major issue to address and more recently has identified the constraints on the supply of natural gas as a major deterrent to economic development in the region.

"Therefore, the chamber supports the expansion of the supply of natural gas, especially to the western Massachusetts region, as a means to assist in economic development efforts as well as to reduce the cost of electricity. The chamber acknowledges that two pipeline expansions are in various stages of development, the Spectra project as well as the Kinder Morgan project, and encourages the development of each. The Chamber believes that there are sufficient permitting and regulatory rules in place to ensure the safety of these projects and the protection of lands in and around these projects.

"While endorsing the increased supply of natural gas, the chamber also reiterates its support for the goal set by the state for the development of solar energy and encourages swift action on a comprehensive energy bill that will further bring on line other alternative energies such as wind and hydro.

"Finally, the chamber is encouraging its members to take advantage of the programs available, many funded through electricity charges, for conservation and efficiencies. There is no better way to lower the cost of electricity than through those efforts.

"Moving toward this balanced portfolio of energy sources and recognizing the conditions and constraints about being in New England will ensure a better future for all - businesses and residents alike."

The Springfield Regional Chamber is a business association representing the region and its geographic hub of Springfield, according to a news release. More than 500 businesses of all sizes, industry and profession, providing leadership in creating a healthy economic climate.

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