

Hello. My name is Meenal Raval. I'm a Philadelphia resident and occasional SEPTA rider. I own a bike shop in Mt Airy and encourage multi-modal transportation, all in an attempt to get people out of cars. I'm also a member of 350Philly, the local chapter of the international group 350.org.

350 is based on our planetary goal of reducing carbon dioxide from over 400 parts per million down to 350 parts per million.

Last October, we learned about SEPTA's proposed Midvale gas power plant to power 6 regional rail lines traveling thru Wayne Junction: the Airport line, the Chestnut Hill East line, the Fox Chase line, the Lansdale / Doylestown line, the Warminster line and the West Trenton line. We learned of this proposal via an article by PlanPhilly titled "SEPTA announces public-private partnership for energy efficient retrofits".

Public-private partnership for energy efficient retrofits. A benign heading. Reading deeper, we learned of the buildout of natural gas infrastructure, which came as a surprise, knowing SEPTA's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This project would likely increase SEPTA's contribution to climate change, rather than reducing it. I know, you'll tell me gas is cleaner burning than coal. Except that most people don't take into account that methane is worse than carbon dioxide when it comes to global warming. Or that drilling and transporting natural gas results in methane leaks, which aren't typically factored into emissions.

This project would affect local air quality. The pollution would add to the smog in a neighborhood already burdened with pollution from SEPTA's bus depot, rail yard, freight line, the Roosevelt Expressway, and a steel recycling facility.

We're talking about Nicetown, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city, with one of the highest rates of children with asthma.

Thirdly, we sense that this gas power plant would be a bad investment for SEPTA, locking SEPTA into using natural gas for 20 years. Years when we can expect the cost of electricity generated by wind or solar to continue declining, and the cost of gas to increase.

Entering into this contract could mean betting against effective climate policies. We ask that SEPTA take a position to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and to instead, invest in efficiency, conservation and clean renewables like wind & solar. This we could support whole-heartedly!

Thank you very much!

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