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## **Columbia Gas to Begin Compliance Checks on Portion of the Merrimack Valley Gas System**

### ***Compliance checks to take place on identified subset of abandoned service lines***

LAWRENCE, Mass. — Columbia Gas of Massachusetts announced today it will begin compliance checks on service lines abandoned last fall as part of the recovery work in the Merrimack Valley. Columbia Gas recently identified some instances of noncompliance with Massachusetts requirements related to the process of abandoning service lines, the inactive gas piping that connected a customer's facilities to the old gas system. As a result, Columbia Gas is planning to verify the processes by which certain service lines were abandoned from the old gas system.

The decision to conduct these compliance checks was determined through ongoing reviews of the gas system as part of Columbia Gas' commitment to the Merrimack Valley. The abandoned service lines that will be inspected are not connected to the active gas system and Columbia Gas is not aware of any safety concerns associated with these service lines. These compliance checks are being conducted out of an abundance of caution and in order to verify that the work on these lines was done consistent with Massachusetts requirements. These compliance checks will not affect the new service lines that were installed in the fall, and therefore there will be no disruption to gas service for customers.

"We recognize that our customers have been through a difficult year as we conducted the recovery and restoration work in these communities. We understand that additional work may frustrate them, and we apologize," said Mark Kempic, President and Chief Operating Officer of Columbia Gas of Massachusetts.

Kempic added, "We are conducting these compliance checks out of an abundance of caution. Our commitment to providing customers with safe and reliable gas service is at the forefront of the decision to conduct this review."

Columbia Gas will begin the process of contacting customers associated with approximately 700 abandoned service lines to schedule these appointments. The compliance checks will be conducted either inside or outside the customer's home or business, depending upon the customer's preference.

If a customer prefers the work be conducted inside the home or business, Columbia Gas will work with the customer to schedule an appointment for the inspection. Each inspection appointment should take roughly 45 minutes and includes a Columbia Gas crew accessing

the service line from inside the home at the site of the meter. If customers prefer not to schedule an indoor appointment or are unable to do so within 10 days after being contacted by the company, Columbia Gas will inspect outside of the home or property. This process should take several hours and will be conducted in a way that is as minimally invasive to the property as possible.

If the inspection finds the abandoned service line was not retired in accordance with Massachusetts requirements, the crew will complete the necessary work. All property will be restored by Columbia Gas upon conclusion of the inspection.

Customers may visit the Customer Care Center at 439 South Union Street in Lawrence, call 1-866-388-3239 or visit [ColumbiaGasMA.com](http://ColumbiaGasMA.com) for more information.

### **About Columbia Gas of Massachusetts**

Columbia Gas of Massachusetts delivers clean, affordable and efficient natural gas to over 320,000 natural gas customers in southeastern Massachusetts, the greater Springfield area and the Merrimack Valley. Headquartered in Westborough, Massachusetts, the company is the largest gas-only provider in the state and is one of NiSource's seven regulated utility companies. NiSource (NYSE:NI) is one of the largest fully-regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 3.5 million natural gas customers and 500,000 electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about Columbia Gas of Massachusetts is available at [www.ColumbiaGasMA.com](http://www.ColumbiaGasMA.com).

### **About NiSource**

NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI) is one of the largest fully-regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 3.5 million natural gas customers and 500,000 electric customers across seven states through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. Based in Merrillville, Indiana, NiSource's approximately 8,000 employees are focused on safely delivering reliable and affordable energy to our customers and communities we serve. NiSource has been designated a World's Most Ethical Company by the Ethisphere Institute since 2012, is a member of the Dow Jones Sustainability - North America Index and was named by *Forbes* magazine as the top-rated utility among America's Best Large Employers in 2017. Additional information about NiSource, its investments in modern infrastructure and systems, its commitments and its local brands can be found at [www.nisource.com](http://www.nisource.com). Follow us at [www.facebook.com/nisource](https://www.facebook.com/nisource), [www.linkedin.com/company/nisource](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nisource) or [www.twitter.com/nisourceinc](https://www.twitter.com/nisourceinc). NI-F

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