

Gas



Natural gas has emerged as a critically important energy source for the United States in the 2010s, and gas pipelines increasingly seek higher rates from consumers to reflect this trend. The lawyers of Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP exclusively represent local government entities such as local distribution companies (LDCs) and municipal utilities, as well as consumer advocates and landowners, with whom we share a complete commitment to maintaining low gas rates.

Our clients rely on us for the full range of regulatory, transactional, negotiation and litigation services related to all aspects of natural gas, with a special long-standing expertise in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) rate cases. We file protests of proposed rate increases with FERC and pursue them through negotiation or to litigation as appropriate. We also deal with issues related to gas tariffs, terms and conditions, and pipeline siting and safety.

The recent development of Marcellus Shale gas has had numerous legal effects on our clients. New sources of gas in non-traditional locations require new pipeline entry points, new directions of pipeline gas flow, additional compressors, new piping or even entire reconfigurations of gas pipelines, all of which impact rates. New pipelines may also need to be built, while other pipelines could see reduced capacity or even face abandonment. We help our clients deal with the rate fallout from all these developments.

At the same time, new gas quality issues are emerging: the intrinsic differences between Marcellus Shale gas from the northeast and natural gas from Texas or the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the combinations of different gas types in one pipeline, is leading FERC to develop new gas quality and interchangeability standards. With fracking and multi-sourced gas coming into the pipelines, we anticipate the development of increasing gas quality concerns for our clients.

The lawyers of Spiegel & McDiarmid combine industry and legal expertise in ways most firms can't. We always keep in mind the end game of the legal process, analyzing every client matter from a big-picture perspective. Most of all, we understand our municipal and public-interest clients' concerns, and we have never represented pipelines. We are fully focused on the consumer interest in keeping rates low

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