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**APGA Commends Senators for Legislation on Behalf of Natural Gas Consumers**

*Washington, D.C. (November 7, 2019)* – This week, Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Richard Burr (R-NC) introduced the Making Pipelines Accountable to Consumers and Taxpayers (MPACT) Act.  This bill closes a loophole that allowed natural gas pipeline companies to overcharge ratepayers for decades. APGA thanks the Senators for their work on behalf of natural gas consumers.

The Natural Gas Act (NGA) establishes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) role in regulating natural gas utilities and transmission pipelines and is intended to be a parallel statute to the Federal Power Act (FPA), which regulates electric utilities. Under the FPA, FERC has the ability to order electric transmission companies to pay refunds to electric consumers if the transmission companies have been found to be charging “unjust and unreasonable” rates.

The NGA offers no such recourse. FERC does not have the authority to order refunds of over-collections by natural gas transmission pipelines. Transmission pipelines have, for decades, been overcharging natural gas consumers billions of dollars and reaping massive windfalls because FERC doesn’t have the authority to have them repay overcharges.

The legislation introduced would reform the NGA to allow FERC to order refunds in rate cases brought under Section 5 of the NGA. This ensures that the NGA functions as it is intended – to allow FERC appropriate authority to remedy overcharges.

“There is no reason that gas customers should be treated differently than electric customers when it comes to the ability of FERC to protect them from over-collections.  This issue is particularly important to public natural gas systems since 95 percent of them are captive to one pipeline,” said Bert Kalisch, APGA President and CEO. “This bill brings about much-needed reform to the NGA and will ensure that natural gas consumers and ratepayers have the ability to reclaim overcharges that are rightfully theirs.”

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*APGA is the national association of municipally and publicly-owned local distribution systems. There are about 1,000 public gas systems serving more than 6 million customers. These public gas utilities are not-for-profit retail distribution entities that are owned by, and accountable to, the citizens they serve. They include municipal gas distribution systems, public utility districts, county districts, and other public agencies that have natural gas distribution facilities.*