Chatham County System Expansion Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this pipeline being constructed to power a data center?

No. Enbridge Gas North Carolina is not building this project to power a data center. As the local natural gas utility provider, Enbridge Gas North Carolina builds infrastructure to meet demand and maintain system reliability for customers across its service territory, including Chatham and Lee Counties.

While a data center could request natural gas service in the future for ancillary uses such as heating water or supporting employee amenities, no such request has been made to date. In addition, the proposed 12-inch diameter pipeline will not have the capacity necessary to support a data center.

I've heard Enbridge Gas North Carolina has already agreed to and disclosed it has plans to serve data centers in Chatham County?

Enbridge as a whole discusses data centers only in aggregate as a growth driver for natural gas and power demand across its North American footprint. There is no agreement in place to supply natural gas to any proposed data center in Chatham County or Lee County, North Carolina.

Who will be served by this pipeline?

Enbridge Gas North Carolina is the franchised natural gas utility serving Chatham and Lee Counties. This pipeline is designed to bring additional natural gas capacity to this area to support growing energy needs. It is not intended to serve any individual customer or industry.

What benefits will the project provide?

Once operational, the pipeline will deliver the natural gas capacity needed to support homes, businesses and manufacturers with reliable, cost-effective natural gas.

How wide is the pipeline right-of-way?

The permanent right-of-way we typically need is about 50 feet wide, with an additional temporary workspace of around 30 feet during construction. That said, those widths can vary depending on the terrain and specific construction needs along the route.

How large is this pipeline?

The proposed pipeline is 12" in diameter.

Can I still farm on a pipeline right-of-way?

Yes, you can generally continue farming on a pipeline right-of-way, and in many cases, agricultural use continues much as it did before. Our approach is to work directly with landowners to understand how their land is used and minimize disruption wherever possible, especially for active farms.

Restrictions are typically limited to deep-rooted tree, structures and excavation so that we have the ability to safely access and maintain the pipeline.

How is working with a land agent helpful?

Enbridge Gas North Carolina's right-of-way agents work closely with landowners and the project team to ensure that activities, such as route selection, construction and restoration minimize impacts on properties and the environment. This includes important right-of-way easement work, including notification, negotiation and acquisition. Enbridge Gas' land team is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with landowners near our pipeline facilities.

How safe are these pipelines?

Enbridge Gas North Carolina has a track record of safety and compliance. Our systems are monitored 24/7 from control centers, and we follow strict federal and state regulations for inspection, maintenance and operation. We also conduct regular ground and aerial patrols, use advanced leak detection systems, and have trained local teams dedicated to maintaining the system's integrity.

Do pipeline operations harm wells and drinking water?

On the construction side, we're proactive about protecting water resources. We try to avoid wells where possible, conduct pre-construction water sampling, monitor wells after construction, and if an impact is identified, we repair or replace the well.

Will this pipeline cross rivers?

As currently proposed, the pipeline would cross the Haw River and tributaries of the Rocky River. We're still early in the design phase, so the exact locations and the crossing methods we'd use haven't been finalized yet.

Will there be an environmental impact assessment conducted?

Projects like this go through a thorough review process in North Carolina. Different state and federal agencies evaluate specific areas like water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat and cultural resources.

At the same time, we're already doing environmental field studies and working with agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These early studies help us spot sensitive areas like streams, wetlands, or habitats for protected species so we can adjust the project to avoid them whenever possible.

How will Enbridge Gas protect sensitive areas like gravesites or other areas archaeological significance?

Protecting these kinds of resources is a critical consideration in the routing process. That's why we're working with S&ME, a North Carolina-based firm with expertise in cultural resource protection, to carefully study the proposed route. The process starts with research and mapping to identify areas where sites may be located. Then, trained archaeologists conduct field surveys to check for any evidence of past activity. Whenever possible, we adjust the route to avoid those areas if culturally significant sites are identified.

This work is done in coordination with state agencies like the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Office of State Archaeology (OSA), which review the findings and provide guidance on how to protect important resources. These agencies help ensure the work meets state and federal standards and that any concerns are addressed before construction moves forward.

Will I have an opportunity to learn more about the project?

In addition to two recent landowner meetings, Enbridge Gas North Carolina will hold a floating community meeting this summer that the public is welcome to attend. The event will be held at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center in Pittsboro on Tuesday, July 28 from 4-8 p.m.

Which agency approves the public need and preferred route alternative for this project?

Unlike an interstate pipeline project regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), this intrastate project does not require a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), and Enbridge Gas does not submit a project route to the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) for approval.

Instead, the NCUC oversees pipeline safety and reviews the project's costs and decisions through an established regulatory process. Once the project is in service, Enbridge Gas must demonstrate that the project was planned and built prudently and that decisions were made in the best interest of customers. The NCUC also has authority over pipeline safety during both construction and operation.

Did Enbridge Gas evaluate alternative routes or simply choose this corridor without considering other available corridors?

Route selection considers multiple corridor options based on a range of engineering, environmental, land-use, constructability, permitting, operational, and community factors. Survey corridors are study areas, not final routes, and may change as additional information becomes available.

Do surveys mean the route is decided?

Surveys are conducted within broad study corridors to collect information used in route evaluation and help inform the final route selection.

Will Enbridge Gas acquire land regardless of consent?

Most easements are acquired through voluntary negotiations with landowners. Enbridge Gas will do all it can to work with property owners to reach an agreeable outcome for both parties. Condemnation proceedings are the very last thing Enbridge Gas wants to happen and involve a legal process that includes just compensation to the landowner for acquired easements.

Aren’t threatened and endangered species surveys conducted during a drought intentionally done to avoid identifying species?

Threatened and endangered species surveys use agency-approved methods and timing requirements established through regulatory guidance. Survey results are reviewed by regulatory agencies as part of the permitting process.

Do utility companies maintain infrastructure or will leaks will go unchecked?

Enbridge Gas monitors its pipeline systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and natural gas utilities are subject to federal and state oversight, inspection, and maintenance requirements. Leaks can occur, but they are uncommon and subject to detection, reporting, response, and repair requirements.

Do Enbridge issues in other states mean this project could perform the same way?

Enbridge Gas and its predecessor companies have operated in North Carolina for over 90 years and in Chatham County since 1955, with a safe track record. Lessons learned from these uncommon incidents are incorporated into procedures, training, inspections, and construction practices and factored into current project planning, oversight, and risk management.

Will regulators enforce rules?

Regulatory agencies have the authority necessary to ensure the project is built and operated in a safe manner.