



ABRA Update #123 – March 31, 2017

Down to the Finish Line: Less Than One Week Remains for DEIS Comments

The April 6 deadline for commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is less than a week away. Submitting comments for the DEIS is the most important action someone can take to influence the decision of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regarding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Even if someone testified at one of the recent FERC comment sessions, they are urged to also file written comments, permitting them to provide more expansive views. To assist commenters, ABRA has prepared a guidance document: [The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline: What is it? What's in it? What you can do!](#)

Here's how comments can be submitted:

1. File comments electronically (which is encouraged) using the eComment feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to Documents and Filings. This is an easy method for submitting brief, text-only comments on a project.
2. File comments electronically by using the eFiling feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to Documents and Filings. With eFiling, one can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on "eRegister."
3. File a paper copy of comments by mailing them to the following address:

Nathaniel J. Davis, Sr., Deputy Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

ABRA Writes Virginia and West Virginia State Legislators

Members of the West Virginia Legislature and the Virginia General Assembly have been told of major problems with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) in letters written to them by ABRA on March 30. The letters were sent in the context of an effort by Dominion Energy to have state legislators send endorsements of the ACP to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The separate letters to the West Virginia and Virginia state legislators argued that:

- The ACP is not needed. Numerous studies have warned of overbuilding of natural gas pipelines in the East letter. New forecasts reduce the expectations for future generating

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requirements for areas to be served by the ACP, thus diminishing the amount of natural gas claimed by the project's sponsors to be needed. Furthermore, two-thirds of the new generating capacity being built in the country is based on solar and wind energy, while the percentage of new capacity generated by natural gas has reduced significantly.

- The claims of new jobs that would be created by the ACP are grossly exaggerated. The sponsors of the ACP claim that the project “holds the promise of thousands of new jobs.” This is not true! Most construction jobs created by the ACP will be temporary and held by out of state contract employees. The small number of permanent jobs created by the ACP in each state is offset by the economic harm that would be dealt to existing businesses. (Specific examples in each state are cited).
- Serious and permanent harm to Virginia's natural resources would result from the ACP. Dominion's claim that the ACP would pose no threat to the integrity of natural resources is a myth. Informational filings on the project make it increasingly clear that the quality of water resources will be seriously compromised by the ACP. Furthermore, a just-completed study by our coalition has concluded that a cumulative total of 38 miles of mountaintops and adjacent ridgetops (19 miles in each state) would be removed by ACP construction.
- The ACP would not serve the public good. Should the ACP receive approval from FERC, it would be granted the right of eminent domain to take private property for private gain. When a project is 1) not needed, 2) would result in negative economic impacts to affected businesses, communities and landowners, and 3) would bring serious and permanent damage to each state's natural resources, it is not in the best interest of the citizens of either state.

A link to the West Virginia letter is [here](#) and to the Virginia letter [here](#).

Augusta Board of Supervisors Raises Serious Questions With DEIS

The many deficiencies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were strongly criticized in a [March 28 letter](#) to Cheryl A. LaFleur, Acting Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, by the Augusta County, VA Board of Supervisors. Supervisors Chairman Tracy Pyles said:

After our review of the DEIS, we are concerned with the documents continual acceptance of Atlantic submitted plans and procedures as sufficient in mitigating adverse impacts. We believe that the DEIS is essentially a summarization of Atlantic's claims, figures, and numbers rather than a critical analysis in which these claims are thoroughly vetted for their comprehensiveness, evaluated independently and verified for accuracy.

The letter proceeds to cite specific examples of missing or incorrect analysis on alternative routes, traffic impact, urban service areas (under the county's comprehensive plan), agriculture, landfill sites, water sources and karst. In the conclusion to his letter, Chairman Pyles said:

In conclusion, we would like to reference a recent ruling by a federal judge that Dominion's coal ash site in Chesapeake, Virginia is leaking arsenic and is in violation of the Clean Water Act. This revelation demonstrates that mitigation plans are not always sufficient in reducing negative environmental and health/safety impacts to “less than significant levels.” It also demonstrates the vigilance that is necessary on the part of assessment, permitting and enforcement agencies to protect the environment and public health. We hope that the Final Environmental Impact Statement will embody such vigilance and answer the questions we have detailed above.

New Story Map Highlights Potential Harm to Shenandoah Mountain

A new story map entitled “Proposed Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area and the ACP” is now available. Produced by Lynn Cameron of ABRA member Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, the piece points out that “a permanent corridor of this magnitude could degrade the natural and scenic characteristics of the proposed National Scenic area to the point where it could jeopardize its viability for Congressional designation.” The new story map is available [here](#). Also, see related *Recorder* story below.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Dominion has no handle on karst, landowners say

- The Recorder – 3/30/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Dominion_has_no_handle_on_karst_landowners_say_20170330.pdf

Landowner alleges Dominion maintaining willful ignorance to keep their project rolling on selected route

VA Outdoors Foundation says its power is limited

- The Recorder – 3/30/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/VOF_says_power_is_limited_20170330.pdf

VOF totally sidesteps the issue of whether it should be making a public stand in support of its mission...deferring decisions until “higher powers” make them for you is not leadership...or stewardship

Couple battles to save farm

- The Recorder – 3/30/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Couple_battles_to_save_farm_20170330.pdf

Dominion’s laziness and arrogance causing untold stress and anguish across region...this is one example

Related:

- http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Dominions_treatment_of_landowners_abusive-Recorder_20170330.pdf

Local and Climate Activists Unite to Oppose Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- Between The Lines – 3/29/17

<http://www.btlonline.org/2017/seg/170407cf-btl-leeper.html>

Additional media coverage of the March can be accessed in the article and below:

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Media_Coverage_of_the_March_APPPL.pdf

Proposed pipeline would negatively impact Shenandoah Mountain

- The Recorder – 3/30/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Proposed_pipeline_would_impact_ShenMtn_20170330.pdf

Dominion has dismissed visual impacts to the area as views of the pipeline corridor would be obscured by trees from one specific vantage point (US 250 over Shenandoah Mtn)

See the related Story Map [here](#)

Nelson supervisors debate commenting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline proposal

- Nelson CountyTimes – 3/29/17

http://www.newsadvance.com/nelson_county_times/news/nelson-supervisors-debate-commenting-on-atlantic-coast-pipeline-proposal/article_7adfca4e-e997-55fd-bc8b-98f3d70c85c5.html

Nelson BOS declines to comment on Atlantic Coast Pipeline, thus projecting tacit approval

Dominion using its power to trample people

- The News Leader – 3/28/17

<http://www.newsleader.com/story/opinion/readers/2017/03/28/dominion-using-its-power-trample-people/99496612/>

Dominion lies, McAuliffe cheerleads...who does he work for again?

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

West Virginia OKs water permit for Mountain Valley Pipeline

- The Roanoke Times – 3/24/17

http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/west-virginia-oks-water-permit-for-mountain-valley-pipeline/article_b2dd5ba7-eb9f-5f5f-bbd7-84738f879051.html

Mountain Valley will need a similar water quality permit in Virginia but has not yet completed the necessary application

Barnstorming tour aims to Roll Back Pollution

- Augusta Free Press – 3/29/17

<http://augustafreepress.com/barnstorming-tour-aims-roll-back-pollution/>

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and chapters will take to the highways and byways of North Carolina and Virginia for eight days in April on a barnstorming tour of communities threatened by natural gas pipelines

State senator: Trump's energy order means its time to end 'farce' on Virginia utility rate review

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 3/28/17

http://www.richmond.com/business/local/state-senator-trump-s-energy-order-means-its-time-to/article_f04a8941-db47-5858-a33c-5c8007049f64.html

A bipartisan group of critics of the rate review freeze have long argued that the justification for the law was always misleading at best

Make ‘em take the pledge: no more snuff boxes!

- Henrico Citizen – 3/28/17

http://www.henicocitizen.com/opinions/article/make_em_take_the_pledge_no_more_snuff_boxes0328

More on the issue of Dominion's purchase of Virginia legislators

Big Picture:

Policy Shift Helps Coal, but Other Forces May Limit Effect

- The New York Times – 3/28/17

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/business/energy-environment/trump-coal-executive-order-impact.html>

“At the end of the day, coal will still have to compete with a host of other fuels...”

Related:

- <https://theintercept.com/2017/03/28/donald-trump-rewards-fossil-fuel-industry-by-signing-climate-denial-executive-order/>

In search of a quorum: 3 potential FERC nominees bring deep business and energy backgrounds

- Utility Dive – 3/27/17

<http://www.utilitydive.com/news/in-search-of-a-quorum-3-potential-ferc-nominees-bring-deep-business-and-en/438797/>

All three presumptive nominees all seem to fit well with the president's agenda of reducing regulation, strengthening the nation's infrastructure and providing support for the coal industry

New Nuclear: North Anna Unit 3 Should Be Approved Before The End Of May

- Forbes – 3/24/17

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rodadams/2017/03/24/new-nuclear-north-anna-unit-3-should-be-approved-before-the-end-of-may/#5a42ec674013>

Though the NRC's Construction & Operations License (COL) gives federal approval to the project, VA still has a say, as does the market...sort of...this reactor could cost Dominion ratepayers over \$100 BILLION over its potential lifetime (\$20B + 40 years at 10% ROI + license extensions) and represents the ultimate cash cow for Dominion and its stockholders...so, market be damned!

Related:

<http://southeastenergynews.com/2017/03/27/amid-setbacks-in-other-states-virginia-utility-moves-forward-with-nuclear-plan/>

Columbia's WB XPress Gets Favorable Environmental Assessment from FERC

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 3/27/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Columbia_WBExpress_Favorable_EA_20170327.pdf

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission staff concluded that WB XPress [CP16-38] "would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment."

Bruised But Not Broken, Dakota Access Line Foes Turn to Keystone

- Yahoo Finance – 3/30/17

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/bruised-not-broken-dakota-access-164133466.html>

Among the pipelines they aim to target are Keystone; Dominion Resources Inc.'s \$5 billion, 564-mile Atlantic Coast pipeline...and Energy Transfer Partners LP's expansion of the Bayou Bridge line that delivers oil to Louisiana

Opinion: In Trump vs. renewable energy, Trump is already losing

- Market Watch – 3/30/17

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/in-trump-vs-renewable-energy-trump-is-already-losing-2017-03-30>

"coal is a smaller industry than you think, and renewables are a bigger one than you realize. Only about 70,000 people work in coal mining, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and more than half have non-industry-specific skills like finance and truck driving" ...for reference, in 2013, the population of Augusta County, VA was nearly 74,000

(https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&iion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=Augusta+County+VA+population&*)

...and nobody is making decisions of global importance based on saving the jobs in Augusta County!

Big companies defy Trump on climate change

- CNBC – 3/30/17

<http://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/30/big-companies-defy-trump-on-climate-change.html>