



ABRA Update #110 – December 22, 2016

Thank you!

Below is a report on Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance's in 2016. The bottom line: the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is a full year behind its original envisioned schedule. Many of the questions and concerns we began voicing about the project in 2014 are now being echoed by many of the agencies responsible for making decisions about whether the ACP will be built.

The most important reason for the success of our efforts during the past year was the financial support from ABRA's membership organization and the incredible donation of time and talent from the people involved in the organizations. A big thanks to all!

As we embark on 2017, the challenges will steepen and need for an even stronger effort will be required. Your financial support will be an important factor in helping assure that ABRA's efforts meet these challenges.

Visit http://www.abralliance.org/support_ABRA_donate/ to learn how you can help.

The next issue of *ABRA Update* will be January 5. Happy Holidays.

ABRA Year-end Report for 2016 December 20, 2016

The Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA) was formed in September 2014 as a coalition of organizations in response to the threat to the ecology, economies and way of life posed by the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to affected areas of West Virginia and Virginia. This is a brief review of the coalition's major accomplishments in 2016.

- **Increased communications to coalition membership** – *ABRA Update*, the weekly e-newsletter, was issued 50 times in 2016. Its coverage was increased to monitor developments on other pipelines projects in the region and elsewhere in the country. In addition, numerous special alerts were sent to the more than 2500 people who receive *Update* directly or indirectly. In August, a Facebook page was launched to enhance communication timeliness on pertinent developments.
- **Created relationships with other pipeline-fighting groups** – A relationship was established with the coalition opposing the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) in West Virginia and southwestern Virginia: Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights (POWHR). ABRA also provided resource assistance to groups in North Carolina that are fighting the ACP, and began working with organizations elsewhere in the country and nationally that are opposing other pipeline projects in the country, particularly regarding the abusive use of eminent domain authority in such projects.

- **Expanded opportunities for coalition networking and strategy development by holding two Pipeline Summits** – Both events were co-sponsored with POWHR. The first Summit, held April 23 in Weyers Cave, VA was attended by 120 persons. The second Summit, held November 12 in Natural Bridge, VA, attracted over 170 persons. Representatives from North Carolina groups attended the second Summit.
- **Assisted ABRA member groups in responding to new challenges posed by the ACP** – Held special public meetings in response to the re-routing of the ACP through Pocahontas County, WV, Bath County, VA and the Deerfield Valley portion of Augusta County, VA. ABRA also helped organize local groups in Bath and Pocahontas Counties to oppose the re-routing. Both groups have joined the coalition. ABRA also helped enhance cooperation among and assistance from coalition members on numerous issues, including the proposed Buckingham County, VA compressor station and the dangers posed by the ACP to valuable historic and cultural sites.
- **Elevated ABRA's role as a central voice in the media on pipeline issues** – Coordinated the announcements and promotion of two significant economic studies. One study, released in February, examined the negative impact the ACP would have on four Virginia counties (Highland, Augusta, Nelson and Buckingham). A second study set forth a case that the ACP and MVP are unnecessary to meet projected natural gas needs because existing infrastructure is sufficient. ABRA spokespersons were throughout the year frequently resources for the media.
- **Heightened contact with public officials at the federal, state and local levels** – Numerous meetings were held with key government officials during 2016 to make the case of why the ACP should not be built. In addition to meetings with numerous Members of Congress, state officials and local governments, significant discussions took place with officials at the National Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior and White House Council on Environmental Quality.
- **Strengthened the organizational capabilities of ABRA** – The coalition has grown to 51 member organizations, a 132% increase from ABRA's original size. The Steering Committee that governs the coalition was increased to 16 persons to reflect this membership growth. Standing committees were created to focus upon Legal, Environment, Communications, and Finance areas. Staff resources were increased by hiring a part-time Executive Director to oversee ABRA's activities and enhance the strategic coordination among ABRA committees and member organizations.

Plans for 2017

The activities of ABRA in 2016 have had a constructive impact on the coalition's overall objective of defeating the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. The planned schedule for the ACP is essentially a year behind the original schedule announced by Dominion Resources in September 2014, and many of the serious questions and concerns that ABRA initially raised about the ACP are also being voiced by agencies with decision-making responsibilities regarding the pipeline. That is evidence of the success of our efforts.

However, with changes in the public policy climate on energy and environmental issues as the result of the November 8 elections, the challenges for ABRA in 2017 have grown. The difficulty of our mission being achieved has significantly steepened.

The coalition Steering Committee will meet in early January to assess those challenges, address what directions we should pursue in 2017 and what determine what resources will be necessary. It is anticipated that the role of ABRA and the extent of its programs and activities will necessarily increase in the coming year. Further help from ABRA member organizations will be needed if we are to succeed.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Foundation works with Dominion on conversion

- The Recorder – 12/22/16
http://www.abralliance.org/wp_content/uploads/2016/12/Foundation_works_with_Dominion_on_conversion-Recorder_20161222.pdf
 VOF raising eyebrows and blood pressures with easement conversion agreements...insists they do not mean VOF is acquiescing

Governor McAuliffe applauded by Southside businesses for Atlantic Coast Pipeline support

- Southside Daily – 12/21/16
<http://southsidedaily.com/2016/12/21/governor-mcauliffe-applauded-by-southside-businesses-for-atlantic-coast-pipeline-support/>
 EnergySure coalition thanks ACP's tireless cheerleader

Dominion listed among America's best corporate citizens by Forbes

- Augusta Free Press – 12/21/16
<http://augustafreepress.com/dominion-listed-among-americas-best-corporate-citizens-forbes/>
 In this holiday season, we knew you would appreciate this news!

Dominion Power and Its Sponsored Blog Embrace a Post-Truth World

- Blue Virginia – 12/21/16
<http://bluevirginia.us/2016/12/dominion-power-embraces-post-truth-world>
 Picking a fight over truth, lies and "fake news"

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

EPA finds fault with environmental review of Mountain Valley Pipeline

- Roanoke Times – 12/21/16
http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/franklin_county/epa-finds-fault-with-environmental-review-of-mountain-valley-pipeline/article_1f837884-1f70-5074-a68c-b70c9b8980co.html
 EPA blasts MVP DEIS as "incomplete", "insufficient", overlooking hazards "that have not been assessed".
 Related:
http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/regional-governments-bash-pipeline-impact-statement/article_d4702ed6-6be9-50d4-8a63-6188b085bd26.html

Chesapeake council OK's natural gas-fueled power plant by controversial Chesapeake Energy Center

- The Virginian-Pilot – 12/20/16
http://pilotonline.com/news/government/local/chesapeake-council-ok-s-natural-gas-fueled-power-plant-by/article_9dd90790-a49b-59b3-a3fo-a875c7cbb9e5.html
 Supposedly not depending on the ACP...for now

Big Picture:

Donald Trump And Climate Change Policy: Investors And Environmental Activists Fear Trump Will Gut Corporate Disclosure Rule

- International Business Times – 12/22/16
<http://www.ibtimes.com/political-capital/donald-trump-climate-change-policy-investors-environmental-activists-fear-trump>

More Weaknesses Seen in Companies Behind the Dakota Access Pipeline Project

- IEEFA – 12/21/16

<http://ieefa.org/ieefa-update-weaknesses-seen-companies-behind-dakota-access-pipeline-project/>

ETP appears to be on increasingly shaky ground

North Pole expected to reach 50 degrees warmer than normal

- The Christian Science Monitor – 12/21/16

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2016/1221/North-Pole-expected-to-reach-50-degrees-warmer-than-normal?cmpid=FB>

If climate change continues unchecked, we could see similarly high temperatures in the Arctic become commonplace by the second half of the century

Related:

- <https://www.carbonbrief.org/record-breaking-arctic-warmth-extremely-unlikely-without-climate-change>

Antitrust Claims: A Novel Line of Attack by Groups Opposing Natural Gas Infrastructure Projects

- The National Law Review – 12/19/16

<http://www.natlawreview.com/article/antitrust-claims-novel-line-attack-groups-opposing-natural-gas-infrastructure>

Novel? Yes. Tough sell to the courts? Most likely.

EPA changes its stand on fracking, says it can harm drinking water in ‘some circumstances’

- The Washington Post – 12/13/16

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/12/13/fracking-can-harm-drinking-water-in-some-circumstances-epa-says/?hpid=hp_hp-more-top-stories_fracking-0747pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.b7aac0b49954

Report finds a range of possible impacts from fracking, from temporary changes in water quality to the complete contamination of drinking water wells

Feds Deny LNG Export Through Oregon – Developer Turns to Trump

- Common Dreams -012/20/16

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2016/12/20/feds-deny-lng-export-through-oregon-developer-turns-trump>

Veresen plans to re-file application under a more-favorable administration...zombie project refuses to simply die

President Obama bans oil drilling in large areas of Atlantic and Arctic oceans

- The Washington Post – 12/20/16

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/12/20/president-obama-expected-to-ban-oil-drilling-in-large-areas-of-atlantic-and-arctic-oceans/?utm_term=.c07d54a5f41f

Move will protect large portions of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas in the Arctic and a string of canyons in the Atlantic stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia

Related:

- <http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/Inhabit/2016/1220/Obama-limits-offshore-oil-as-Keep-it-in-the-Ground-idea-rises>