



ABRA Update #130 – May 18, 2017

FERC Revises Schedule for Issuing a Final EIS for the ACP

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued a new schedule for its environmental review of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. In a [formal notice](#) to be published in the May 19 Federal Register, the agency indicates it plans to issue a final Environmental Impact Statement on July 21, 2017, with a deadline decision deadline on the project of October 19, 2017.

DPMC Urges Thorough Water Analysis, Public Input for ACP & MVP

The Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition (DPMC) has asked the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for transparency and broad public input in the agency's reviews of water quality applications for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that an applicant for a federal license or permit provide a certification that any discharges from the facility will comply with the act, including state-established water quality standard requirements. Individual states are empowered to issue such certification. Last year, the State of New York denied Section 401 certification for the proposed Constitution Pipeline project, effectively shutting down the project (though the decision is being appealed in the courts by the project's developers).

DEQ announced on April 6 that it would conduct individual analysis for the ACP and MVP projects. The [DPMC's letter of May 15](#) requests that the water quality applications for pipelines promptly be made available online to inform the public of the submittals and to provide timely and ready access to relevant documents. The letter also asks that DEQ hold multiple hearings along the routes of each pipelines so that interested citizens can participate in the proceedings without traveling long distances. Specifically, the DPMC urges a minimum of three hearings along the ACP route and at least two hearings along the MVP route.

The DPMC letter also describes information and analyses that the applications should include before the agency can properly consider them. DPMC notes that DEQ has already expressed several areas of concerns in the agency's comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in its comments on the ACP Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Concluding, the DPMC states:

Citizens of Virginia expect and will demand more from DEQ, in keeping with Governor McAuliffe's promises that these projects be "constructed in the most environmentally protective manner." And if the most environmentally protective methods are shown to violate the State's requirements, they may not be constructed. Again, we are encouraged that DEQ has chosen to conduct individual analyses and public hearings for each project, in which all water quality-related aspects of each proposal will be assessed. The State can determine whether each project is legally permissible, only if such detailed and comprehensive reviews are completed.

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Landowners Express Concerns to Virginia State Water Control Board

Over two dozen affected landowners and others concerned about the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) provided commentary May 17 to the Virginia State Water Control Board on the dangers to state water quality posed by the two pipeline projects. The Board is the state agency responsible for deciding whether to certify the ACP and MVP under requirements of Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act. Although the water certification issue was not on the meeting agenda, the presentations were made to provide education to the Water Board members in advance of its considering the issue – perhaps as early as its Fall meeting – after staff for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality completes its analysis of each pipeline’s application for water quality certification.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Valley Center pipeline route variation no better

- The Recorder – 3/18/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valley_Center_pipeline_route_variation_no_better-Recorder_20170518.pdf

“Dominion is refusing the recommendation of its geology consultant, GeoConcepts Inc. to follow a route avoiding karst, a route local landowners support...”

LEPC hears pipeline plans

- The Inter-Mountain – 5/18/17

<http://www.theintermountain.com/news/local-news/2017/05/lepc-hears-pipeline-plans/>

Dominion continues its engagement of local emergency planning and response committees.

McAuliffe: Virginia will regulate carbon emissions; 'the threat of climate change is real'

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 5/16/17

http://www.richmond.com/news/mcauliffe-virginia-will-regulate-carbon-emissions-the-threat-of-climate/article_cda09321-48a9-52b4-b6ce-8226a0c1ee0f.html

McAuliffe’s executive directive instructs the DEQ to develop a proposed regulation for the State Air Pollution Control Board to abate, control or limit carbon dioxide from power plants that will "allow for the use of market-based mechanisms and the trading of carbon dioxide allowances through a multi-state trading program."

Related:

- http://www.richmond.com/business/virginia-ag-state-board-can-regulate-carbon-pollution/article_088e3df1-4d1e-5e70-8436-72d546495d5b.html

- <https://thinkprogress.org/virginia-governor-pushes-carbon-emissions-reduction-plan-60ff471129b9>

Dominion letter shows why staying neutral on pipeline project could help Northam

- The Washington Post – 5/16/17

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/dominion-letter-shows-why-staying-neutral-on-pipeline-project-could-help-northam/2017/05/16/1e60fb40-3a63-11e7-9e48-c4f199710b69_story.html

Dominion Energy chief executive Thomas Farrell sent a letter May 12 to the company’s 76,000 employees, retirees and shareholders throughout Virginia that urged them to consider Dominion’s pipeline project when voting in the June 13 gubernatorial primary.

Can Dominion’s Stranglehold on Virginia Politics Be Loosened?

- Blue Virginia – 5/14/17

<http://bluevirginia.us/2017/05/can-dominions-stranglehold-virginia-politics-loosened>

Dominion’s “donations have been fairly evenly split among Democrats, Republicans and others, showing that the utility’s goals are not ideological so much as part of their continuing effort to purchase Virginia’s political class.”

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Landowners Launch Call to Defund the Mountain Valley Pipeline as Movement Grows

- Oil Change International – 5/18/17

<http://priceofoil.org/2017/05/18/landowners-launch-call-to-defund-the-mountain-valley-pipeline-as-global-movement-grows/>

Across North America and beyond, a growing movement of communities, tribes, and cities is pushing banks to divest from dirty pipelines – going directly after the money that enables the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure.

Related:

- <https://cleantechnica.com/2017/05/16/u-s-bank-excludes-gas-oil-pipelines-project-financing/>

WV DEP chief Caperton refuses hearing on MVP pipeline appeal

- Charleston Gazette-Mail – 5/16/17

<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/20170516/wv-dep-chief-caperton-refuses-hearing-on-mvp-pipeline-appeal>

Additional appeal to 4th Circuit Court of Appeals is likely.

Big Picture:

Trump triggers battle over energy nominees

- The Hill – 5/16/17

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/333219-trump-triggers-battle-over-energy-nominees>

Both sides see it as a crucial fight for setting the agenda on American domestic energy production.

GOP Sen. Grassley questions DOE baseload review in letter to Perry

- Utility Dive – 5/18/17

<http://www.utilitydive.com/news/gop-sen-grassley-questions-doe-baseload-review-in-letter-to-perry/443003/>

“I’m concerned that a hastily developed study, which appears to pre-determine that variable, renewable sources such as wind have undermined grid reliability, will not be viewed as credible, relevant or worthy of valuable taxpayer resources,” Grassley wrote.

The day has arrived: the Marcellus is overpiped

- Kallanish Energy – 5/17/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kallanish-The_day_has_arrived-The_Marcellus_is_overpiped_20170517.pdf

Does the word “Permian” bode ill for the Marcellus and Utica basins?

Pennsylvania School Now Doing Emergency Drills in Case of Pipeline Explosion

- DeSmog – 5/17/17

<https://www.desmogblog.com/2017/05/17/risk-pipeline-explosion-emergency-drill-pennsylvania-school-mariner-east-2-route>

The school is one of dozens neighboring the route for Sunoco Logistics' Mariner East 2 pipeline, now under construction and slated for completion this fall.

Nexus opponents sue to stop pipeline

- Cleveland.com – 5/15/17

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2017/05/nexus_pipeline_opponents_sue_t.html

The suit, filed by more than 60 residents of Medina, Lorain and Summit counties, asks the court to prevent FERC from allowing construction of the pipeline to begin.

Rover misses \$1.5 million payment to preservation agency

- The Columbus Dispatch – 5/15/17

<http://www.dispatch.com/news/20170515/rover-misses-15-million-payment-to-preservation-agency/1>

The State Historic Preservation Office said Rover Pipeline hasn't honored an agreement to pay for harm the project does to historic properties.

Taking Politics Out of Climate Change

- PBS: Nova Next – 5/17/17

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/earth/depoliticizing-climate-change/>

Beliefs—whether liberal or conservative—can influence our perception and reasoning capabilities. When confronted with information that challenges our deeply-held beliefs, our brain reacts as though we are being [physically attacked](#). Reframing discussions (not *arguments!*) in such a way that your counterpart doesn't feel attacked may yield better results.

Financial Times declares a winner in the war for energy's future, and Big Oil won't be happy

- ThinkProgress – 5/18/17

<https://thinkprogress.org/renewable-energy-is-unstoppable-declares-financial-times-40c222f439bb>

'Fossil fuels have lost. The rest of the world just doesn't know it yet.'