



ABRA Update #87 – July 8, 2016

Dominion’s Response to FERC Information Requests: An Incomplete!

The [June 13 request](#) (with over 180 specific questions) from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to Dominion Transmission, Inc. (DTI) for additional information on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (reported upon in [ABRA Update #84](#)) was met with a [July 1 filing](#) by DTI that responded to less than one-third of FERC’s questions, some of which date back to December 2015. And, among some of the answers provided stretched the meaning of credibility. Two examples:

1. FERC asked DTI to provide a description of the Natural Heritage Inventory sensitive vegetation communities (e.g., Central Appalachian Shale Barrens, Central Appalachian Basic Ash-Hickory Woodland) affected by the ACP (without disclosing locations as requested by the VDCR). Dominion responded:

The ACP’s proposed route does not cross or affect either the Central Appalachian Shale Barrens or the Central Appalachian Basic Ash-Hickory Woodland Natural Heritage Inventory sensitive vegetation communities.

This response is contradicted by a Story Map recently posted on the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition website, [“Unique Shale Barrens Threatened by the ACP.”](#)

2. FERC asked DTI to provide a table that identifies waterbodies where in-stream blasting or blasting adjacent to a waterbody may be required. The company responded:

An updated table identifying waterbodies where in-stream blasting or blasting adjacent to a waterbody may be required is provided as Question 20 Attachment 1 (Contains Privileged Information – Do Not Release).

In other words, if you’re a property owner living proximate to a stream where blasting will take place, you won’t know about it until it happens.

ABRA is compiling a summary of some of the more prominent responses to FERC’s questions, which will be posted next week on our website.

For questions about Update items, contact:

Articles – Lew Freeman, lewfreeman@gmail.com

In the News – Dan Shaffer, dshaffer@abralliance.org

March on Mansion Transportation Available, Sign up Now

[Bus transportation from 10 different locations](#) throughout Virginia has been arranged for those participating in the March on the Mansion on Saturday, July 23 in Richmond. ABRA member organizations in Virginia are urged to promote a strong turnout from your respective membership. Sign up for this important event [here](#).

Karst geology poses severe challenges for Mountain Valley Pipeline

A new study, "[Geologic Hazards in the Karst Regions of Virginia and West Virginia, Investigations and Analysis Concerning the Proposed Mountain Valley Gas Pipeline](#)," by Dr. Ernst H. Kastning, Ph.D., P.G., a retired former Professor of Geology at Radford University, demonstrates severe problems posed by building a pipeline in karst terrain in the Appalachian Mountains. Karst terrain is topography characterized by sinkholes and caves related to an underground drainage system.

The study, dated July 3, suggests that the combination of severe slopes, poor soils and disturbances and loading during construction of the pipeline will create severe erosion and **sedimentation in the area. Kastning's analysis also shows that there will be damage to surface water and aquifers that are vital to local residents and to the ecosystems surrounding the area.** Construction in areas of severe slopes, slip soils, and possible ground shaking from earthquakes raises the possibility of pipeline failure and ensuing catastrophic events.

A coalition of community groups and organizations from eight counties affected by the proposed pipeline, including Greenbrier, Monroe and Summers in West Virginia and Giles, Craig, Montgomery, Roanoke and Franklin in Virginia, commissioned the study.

SAFER Pipelines Act Introduced in Congress

Legislation that would require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to broaden the factors it considers in evaluating proposed natural gas pipelines was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 6 by New Jersey Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D). H.R. 5630, the Safe and Accountable Federal Energy Revue for Pipelines Act of 2016, would:

- Amend the Natural Gas Act to require FERC to conduct an evidentiary hearing and/or a cumulative review of major energy infrastructure projects planned throughout a region;
- Require FERC to undertake additional analysis to determine potential cumulative impacts from other pipelines within the same State as well as those within 100 miles of a proposed project; and
- Require FERC to monitor all approved and constructed projects for five years.

The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee (Representative Watson Coleman is not a member of that committee). Consideration of the measure is unlikely this year given the very limited number of legislative days remaining in this Congress. However, in anticipation that the bill will be reintroduced next year it is important that ABRA members alert their own Representatives and Senators about H.R. 5630 and the importance of the issues it raises being addressed by the Congress. At this writing, the text of the bill is not available, but a [fact sheet](#) discusses its major provisions.

New Study Shows Adverse Effects on People Living Near Natural Gas Fields

A new study released June 20 concludes that individuals living near natural gas production sites have elevated levels of volatile organic compounds that are used in shale gas extraction (specifically: benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene). The study was conducted by a collaborative group of organizations and focused upon citizens living and **working near drilling sites in the Pavillion, WY area. The study's findings are [reported upon](#)** by Shale Gas International, an industry news source.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

McAuliffe touts pipeline at Girls State

- The Farmville Herald – 6/28/16

<http://www.farmvilleherald.com/2016/06/mcauliffe-touts-pipeline-at-girls-state/>

This one slipped through the cracks...funny that the Governor is encouraging young women to create the future while he is holding so tightly to the past

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Transmission Pipeline Intelligence

- Fire Engineering – 7/6/16

<http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/2016/07/transmission-pipeline-intelligence.html>

Good information for all of us to have...especially relevant for your county administrators!

Heald: Climate change and coal ash

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 7/6/16

http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article_86726c09-91a7-5423-b510-27f738709daf.html

Once again, we find DEQ asleep at the wheel

Big Picture:

'People Over Pipelines' march to converge at Statehouse July 18

- MassLive.com – 7/7/16

http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/07/people_over_pipelines_march_to.html

Citizens rally in Massachusetts in similar fashion to upcoming March on the Mansion

Federal Court Upholds FERC's Approach on LNG Environmental Permitting and Shifts Focus to Challenges to DOE's Environmental Review

- JD Supra Business Advisor – 6/30/16

<http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/federal-court-upholds-ferc-s-approach-92411/>

Decision will require a new approach for legal challenges

Related:

- <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060039619>

EPA raises concerns about Atlantic Sunrise pipeline

- State Impact Pennsylvania – 7/7/16

<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2016/07/07/epa-raises-concerns-about-atlantic-sunrise-pipeline/>

Analysis of reasonable alternatives was not carried out in FERC's EIS...back to the drawing board?

Related:

- http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2016/07/feds_tells_transco_not_to_proceed_on_pipeline_for.html

D.C. Circuit Questions FERC's Income Tax Allowance Policy

- The National Law Review – 7/1/16

<http://www.natlawreview.com/article/dc-circuit-questions-ferc-s-income-tax-allowance-policy>

Potential loss of double income tax recovery may undermine the attractiveness of Master Limited Partnership-owned pipelines...i.e. pipelines may become less-attractive investments overall

Senate prohibits customer fees to pay for new gas pipelines

- The National Law Review – 7/1/16
MassLive.com – 6/30/16

http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/06/senate_prohibits_customer_fees.html

Massachusetts ratepayers would not be on the hook to subsidize new pipelines

Related:

- <http://www.recorder.com/Senate-backs-amendment-to-ban-pipeline-tariffs-3180643>
- http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/06/power_plant_owners_oppose_pipe.html

U.S., Canada and Mexico vow to get half their electricity from clean power by 2025

- Washington Post – 6/27/16

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/06/27/u-s-canada-and-mexico-to-pledge-to-source-half-their-overall-electricity-with-clean-power-by-2025/>

Another late-comer...OK, even given the very loose definition of “clean power”, one must ask why we are still subsidizing the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure that have 40+-year lifespans

New Wind & Solar Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Cost Less Than Keeping Aging Nuclear Power Plants Running

- Clean Technica – 7/5/16

<https://cleantechnica.com/2016/07/05/new-wind-solar-lower-greenhouse-gas-emissions-cost-less-keeping-aging-nuclear-power-plants-running/>

Takeaway: Focus on renewables, NOT on extending lifespans or constructing new nuclear (especially the latter!) ... \$19 billion? You HAVE to be kidding!

Troubling Questions Arise About Radioactive Frack Waste Company

- Public News Service – 7/7/16

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2016-07-07/environment/troubling-questions-arise-about-radioactive-frack-waste-company/a52796-1>

As if we didn't already have reasons to oppose fracking in our neighborhoods!