



ABRA Update #69 – March 3, 2016

Overflow Crowds Attend ABRA Meetings in Bath, Pocahontas Counties

It was standing room only in the Bath County Fire Department meeting room on February 25 to hear presentations from ABRA speakers about the proposed rerouting of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) through the northern portion of Bath County. ABRA Chair/Executive Director Lew Freeman provided an overview of the project. Rick Lambert, President of the Virginia Speleological Society, spoke about the impacts the ACP would have on water resources along the new route due to the preponderance of karst topography. Joe Lovett, Executive Director of Appalachian Mountain Advocates, discussed various legal aspects of the project and the rights of affected landowners. The question and answer period that followed was vigorous and extensive. An extensive article on the meeting is featured below (“Be ready to fight, Bath County told”).



Joe Lovett addresses the more than 100 people attending the January 25 ABRA meeting in Hot Springs.

ABRA conducted a similar meeting on March 2 at the Linwood Community Library, proximate to the Snowshoe Ski Resort in Pocahontas County, WV. Once again, 100+ people jammed the meeting space to hear presentations and discuss their concerns over the new ACP route, which would go through the middle of Seneca State Forests, graze Snowshoe and adversely affect several dozens of private land owners. The previous day a Dominion presentation to the Pocahontas County Commissioners evoked a skeptical response from two of the three commissioners regarding the wisdom of the new route.



Rick Lambert describes the impact of the new route in Pocahontas County to an overflow crowd.

Forest Service Requests Comments on New ACP Route

Public comments are being sought by the U.S. Forest Service in response to the request by Dominion Transmission for a special use permit to cross the George Washington (GWNF) and Monongahela (MNF) National Forests as part of its new proposed ACP route through Pocahontas County, WV and Bath County, VA, designated as GWNF-6. The previous route that Dominion had sought to cross the MNF and GWNF, farther north in Pocahontas, Highland and Augusta Counties, was rejected by the Forest Service due to its threat to several endangered species and other concerns. That permit expires on April 16.

The comment deadline on GWNF-6 is March 21. The MNF notice for comment is at http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd493525.pdf. The GWNF notice is available at http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Forest_Service_notice_of_ACP_permit_request_2-29-16.pdf. Detailed maps of the new route through the GWNF are at http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/New_ACP_Route-Detailed_Study_Areas_2-16-16.pdf.

Note: Dominion has been floating within the last week purported variations in the GWNF-6 route. While these need to be examined, remember that the only official proposed route at any given time is what has been filed with FERC. It's another example of the company's propensity to play "route-roulette."

WV Senate Defeats Survey Bill

The West Virginia Senate has voted down a bill that would have let surveyors for natural gas pipelines enter people's private property without permission. The Senators voted on February 29 23-11 to kill a bill that says letting surveyors for natural gas companies on people's property is in the public interest. Virginia law provides a similar right for natural gas companies to survey private land without an owner's permission. Attempts to repeal that statute have failed twice in the General Assembly, as have (so far) several court challenges. The WV defeat is noteworthy because that state's legislature has a long history of usually supporting energy industry proposals.

Correction

Update #68 (February 25) had a typo. The correct date for the Churchville, VA open house to be held by Dominion is Tuesday, March 8, 5-7:30 pm at the Churchville Elementary School.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Be ready to fight, Bath County told

- The Recorder – 3/3/16

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Be_ready_to_fight_Bath_County_told-Recorder_3-3-16.pdf

Residents advised to expect a long, hard fight ahead

Nelson Co. Judge Will Not Rule in Lawsuit Against Pipeline Surveyors

- NBC29.com – 3/2/16

<http://www.nbc29.com/story/31365894/nelson-co-judge-will-not-rule-in-lawsuit-against-pipeline-surveyors>

Judge moves ahead with pipeline lawsuit

- The News Virginian – 2/27/16

http://www.dailyprogress.com/newsvirginian/judge-moves-ahead-with-pipeline-lawsuit/article_b8a98b3a-dceb-11e5-a0ea-97b99c3eb96a.html

“All these owners require is a fair hearing.”

Correspondent of the Day: More analysis needed on pipeline - Richmond Times-Dispatch: Letters-to-the-editor

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 2/24/16

http://www.richmond.com/opinion/your-opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article_8364d193-fb4e-5e74-b011-c03f5a1d343d.html

Challenge to recent supportive article (“The perfect Atlantic Coast Pipeline route doesn’t exist” – 2/11/16)

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

West Virginia Senate Votes Down Pipeline Survey Bill

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 3/2/16

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/NGI_WV_Votes_Down_Survey_Bill_SB596_20160302.pdf

Previous ruling against surveys without consent holds

Franklin County residents in pipeline's path worry about their future

- Roanoke Times – 2/29/16

http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/an-uneasy-feeling-franklin-county-residents-in-pipeline-s-path/article_2c5993e7-2b47-57d2-b3fo-dobad1c289a2.html

The low probability of high-consequence events does not allay the concerns of Franklin residents

Big Picture:

Environmental Group Sues Federal Agency for Alleged Conflict of Interest

- NJ Spotlight – 3/3/16

<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/16/03/02/environmental-group-sues-federal-agency-for-alleged-conflict-of-interest/#>

Says agency is neither “accountable” nor “consistent with democratic governance”...mainly due to its structure and financial dependence on the industry that is supposedly regulates

U.S. predicts fossil fuel to dominate power industry

- The Recorder – 3/3/16

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/US_predicts_fossil_fuel_to_dominate_power_industry-Recorder_3-3-16.pdf

Battle of fossil vs. renewable plays out in projects such as ACP...if the latter wins we all do, ultimately. If not...

U.S. Pipeline Agency Pressed to Regulate Underground Gas Storage

- InsideClimate News – 2/26/16

<http://insideclimatenews.org/news/26022016/phmsa-pipeline-regulator-pressed-regulate-underground-natural-gas-storage-aliso-canyon-methane>

In the absence of national rules, PHMSA recently advised operators to follow storage guidelines created by the American Petroleum Institute

New study says property values not impacted by pipelines

- Akron Beacon-Journal – 2/29/16

<http://www.ohio.com/blogs/drilling/ohio-utica-shale-1.291290/new-study-says-property-values-not-impacted-by-pipelines-1.665410>

Mass. energy chief: Pipelines more likely if no legislative action taken

- Sentinel & Enterprise – 3/2/16

http://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/news/ci_29584939/n-mass-energy-chief-pipelines-more-likely-if#ixzz41s16ZYzz

If there are no alternatives, pipelines are more economically viable to supply domestic demand and will be more easily approved

Kinder Morgan: Federal regulations preempt state rules on proposed pipeline

- New Hampshire Union Leader – 3/2/16

<http://www.unionleader.com/Kinder-Morgan-Federal-regulations-preempt-state-rules-on-proposed-pipeline#sthash.LHTc4oKg.dpuf>

New Hampshire regulators can make all the rules they want...but it makes no difference (KM)

Gas Export Decision Stirs Debate Over Mass. Pipeline Need

- WBUR Boston – 2/24/16

<http://www.wbur.org/2016/02/25/natural-gas-massachusetts-pipelines>

Mass electric ratepayers being asked to pay for natural gas pipeline that is aimed at export...many not happy