

The Recorder

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Dominion CEO more like ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’

Editor, The Recorder,

I found David Christian’s recent letter to The Recorder (“Dominion CEO: Pipeline will be built with care”) to be another example of Dominion casting themselves as the good guys who want only the best for us and our “precious environment” when in fact their chief objective is to generate a huge profit, resulting in a healthy windfall for their executives.

I did not find his letter nostalgic, heartfelt, or touching at all. It was a patronizing letter carefully crafted by a CEO to assuage our fears by suggesting he is one of us, a native Virginian who shares our great love of the “Shenandoah Valley and mountains to the east and west” and who will protect the natural resources we treasure.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Dominion continues to doggedly pursue this venture despite widespread opposition and unanticipated delays because vast sums of money will pour from the 42-inch pipeline with so much fracked gas. This will surely pad the obscene compensation that Tom Farrell and other Dominion executives receive. FYI, Farrell received \$12 million last year in executive compensation (\$71 million for five years) while the entire revenue for Highland County was a little over \$7 million.

If Dominion Resources is so magnanimous and cares so much about our land and people, why do they tie up all the biggest law firms so private landowners have to turn elsewhere for legal help? Why do they strategically sit on so many boards and committees of even reputable conservation organizations? Why do they so generously offer to “freeze utility rates” until 2020 so they can avoid comprehensive earning reviews by the State Corporation Commission for the next six years (when long-term energy rates are depressed)? And why do they push to overturn existing conservation easements and force their way across protected lands, despite the potential consequence of unraveling the permanency and value of easements? It seems all their generosity comes with a hidden price tag.

I remember the initial controversy when the Atlantic Coast Pipeline was first announced. It was not a done deal, Dominion claimed, just an idea being tossed around. It would provide untold jobs and revenue to our state. As it turns out, the same Texas company (Doyle Land Services)

Dominion hired to conduct the land surveys was a huge energy services company that “provides a full suite of land services to support our client’s largest capital projects and their day to day operations and maintenance needs.”

And if the fracked gas is going to either North Carolina or shipped overseas via Hampton, where exactly are the jobs and revenue coming from?

Dominion has shown their hand and nothing Mr. Christian says changes my opinion that Dominion doesn’t care about us, the sanctity of our family farms, and the landscapes we know and cherish. He is merely a spokesperson for Dominion Power and nothing more than a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

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