



Protecting the heritage, resources and economy of the Allegheny-Blue Ridge region

June 2016

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline: *Wrong for the Allegheny & Blue Ridge Region*

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline (APC) is a natural gas pipeline project that has been proposed by Dominion Resources, Duke Energy and their partner companies. It would carry natural gas from the Marcellus Shale field in central West Virginia through Randolph and Pocahontas Counties, into Virginia through Highland, Bath, Augusta, Nelson and Buckingham Counties, and then on to southeast Virginia and North Carolina markets. The proposed pipeline, nearly 600 miles in length, would be 42 inches in diameter, requiring excavation of an 8 to 12-foot-deep trench and the bulldozing of a 125-foot-wide construction corridor. It would traverse steep mountain slopes and fragile karst topography, presenting a potential hazard to regional water supplies and without a net benefit to the aforementioned counties.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), with input from cooperating federal agencies (e.g. National Forest Service, Department of Interior and others), will make the final decision on whether the pipeline receives a permit to be built. At this writing, FERC is in the midst of conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to help the agency determine whether the project merits approval. Another factor in the agency's consideration of the APC is that there are other pipeline proposals that would seek to transport natural gas from West Virginia to southeastern markets. It is unclear if FERC would approve more than one pipeline in the region.

The major rationale for the project, as announced in September 2014 when the project was first proposed, is that there is an abundant supply of natural gas that needs to be carried to electric utility plants in the southeast that need a cleaner fuel to replace coal as a generating fuel.

The Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance, a coalition of 50 organizations in Virginia and West Virginia, disputes the avowed need and appropriateness for the APC because it would:

- Threaten the integrity and safety of water supplies in the immediately affected communities and other communities that are dependent upon water originating in the Allegheny-Blue Ridge region;
- Present serious safety risks because of the proven instability of the karst topography which these proposed routes would traverse, as well as the danger of pipeline failures;
- Endanger the structural character and seriously increase the possibility of long-term erosion in the steep mountain terrain through which the routes would pass;

- Harm the habitat of many protected species of plants and animals unique to the region;
- Compromise the intended uses of public lands, particularly the Monongahela and George Washington National Forests;
- Degrade the usefulness of affected agriculture and forest resources;
- Lower the value of private property of land owners along the routes;
- Diminish the cultural and recreational attractions of the affected communities and the region as a whole; and
- Disrupt and adversely impact the economies and livelihoods of the people and communities affected by the proposed routes.

We are urging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to consider all of the foregoing concerns as it evaluates the application of the ACP. Furthermore, we strongly believe that FERC must:

- Conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that assesses the need for and impacts of the ACP in the context of other natural gas infrastructure projects proposed for the region and consider the rapidly increasing competitiveness of clean, renewable sources of energy;
- Investigate the demand for more natural gas in the markets that the ACP would reportedly serve and the need for new pipelines to meet that demand, given that recent credible studies have concluded that the existing pipeline infrastructure may be adequate; and
- Evaluate the expected life of the Marcellus shale field since recent analyses have predicted that production from the field will soon begin to decline.

Those who wish to communicate their views to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission are urged to write to FERC, indicating you are commenting upon Docket No. CP15-554, as follows:

Electronically: <http://www.ferc.gov/resources/guides/how-to/ecomment.asp>

U.S. Mail: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Be sure to send copies to your Congressman and United States Senators. They need to hear what you think of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">For further information, contact: Lewis Freeman, Chair/Executive Director lewfreeman@gmail.com 540-468-2769 (o/h) or 703-298-8107 (c) www.abralliance.org PO Box 685, Monterey, VA 24465</p> |
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