

## Virginia Lawmakers Call on FERC to Study Cumulative Enviro Impacts of Planned NatGas Pipes

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A handful of Virginia's Democratic legislators have added their names to the list of those calling for FERC to cumulatively review the various natural gas pipeline projects planned to cross parts of Virginia and West Virginia.

In a series of form letters signed last month and filed Wednesday with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the legislators called on FERC to develop a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) examining the cumulative effects of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), Columbia Pipeline Group's WB XPress expansion project and the still-preliminary Appalachian Connector project under development by Williams.

The letters, using nearly identical language, were signed by Virginia Sens. Adam Ebbin and Barbara Favola, along with Dels. Kaye Kory, Alfonso Lopez, Marcus Simon, Sam Rasoul and Rip Sullivan. The letters were submitted to FERC's dockets for ACP and MVP by the Sierra Club's Virginia Chapter.

Echoing familiar environmental arguments against new pipeline infrastructure, the legislators cited climate change, impacts to protected species and habitats, impacts to air quality, the encouragement of new unconventional drilling, water quality impacts and "changes in the rural character" of the region as among the reasons to prepare a programmatic EIS.

Calls for a programmatic EIS for the region have been made before, though experts have said FERC isn't likely to stray from its traditional approach of conducting reviews on a project-by-project basis (see *Shale Daily*, [Nov. 2, 2015](#)).

Among the projects identified by the legislators, MVP and ACP are major greenfield Appalachian takeaway pipes that would cross rural and undeveloped stretches of the Virginia and West Virginia mountains. They have drawn particular scrutiny from landowners and opposition groups (see *Daily GPI*, [May 17](#)).

Lawmakers recently introduced a series of bills in the Virginia General Assembly that would make it more difficult for pipeline companies to survey in the state, but those efforts have failed to gain traction (see *Daily GPI*, [Feb. 10](#)).

Meanwhile, a group of Virginia lawmakers representing the southeastern part of the state came out in support of ACP as a project that will be needed to meet growing demand (see *Daily GPI*, [March 16](#)).

ACP, MVP and WB XPress are all targeting in-service dates in 2018.