



ABRA Update #303 – March 4, 2021

Issue Highlights . . .

- FERC announces public comment period for ACP restoration issues
- Comments on MVP stream crossing proposal due March 22
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FERC announces public comment period for ACP restoration issues

A scoping period to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed restoration plan for the route of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which was cancelled on July 5, 2020, has been announced by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The March 2 notice issued by FERC explains that the Commission is seeking “input from the public and interested agencies regarding the proposed restoration activities associated with the disposition of the Atlantic Coast and Supply Header Projects.” All comments will be due by April 16, 2021 at 5 pm.

Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC had filed a project disposition and restoration plan with FERC on January 4, 2021 (click [here](#) for details on and a link to the plan). A similar plan for the Supply Header Project (SHP) was submitted on November 20, 2020 by Eastern Gas Transmission and Storage, the successor company to Dominion Energy Transmission, Inc., which formerly owned the SHP (click [here](#) for a copy). FERC had initially not planned on accepting public comments on the plans other than on the agency’s public docket. Several ABRA members filed comments on the FERC docket on February 9 voicing several concerns about the ACP restoration plan (click [here](#) for more information).

A copy of the FERC scoping notice calling for comments for both projects, including instructions on how to file, is available [here](#).

Comments on MVP stream crossing proposal due March 22

A February 19 proposal by Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP, LLC) to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) asking for authority to have the Mountain Valley Pipeline change the method for wetlands and waterbodies will be open for public comments. The deadline for comment submission is March 22. The request to FERC asks approval of a change from “the open-cut crossings that were authorized by the Certificate to one of several trenchless methods. Mountain Valley proposes to use trenchless methods at 120 locations to cross 181 waterbodies and wetlands that the Commission originally authorized as open-cut.” A link to the request by MVP, LLC is available [here](#). A copy of the FERC notice is [here](#).

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Regional Issues

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline Is a Bust, but Property Owners Along the Route Are Stuck in Limbo

- Indy Week – 2/24/21

<https://indyweek.com/news/northcarolina/atlantic-coast-pipeline-feature/>

Mountain Valley Pipeline still on target for completion this year, developers say

- The Roanoke Times – 2/23/21

https://roanoke.com/business/local/mountain-valley-pipeline-still-on-target-for-completion-this-year-developers-say/article_a60d22e8-75f7-11eb-a611-4bea330dabaf.html

Developers of the Mountain Valley Pipeline say it remains on schedule for completion by year's end, despite a restart in seeking government approval to cross nearly 500 streams and wetlands.

Investors Managing \$250 Billion in Assets Call on Big Banks to Stop Funding Mountain Valley Pipeline

- Common Dreams – 2/25/21

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/02/25/investors-managing-250-billion-assets-call-big-banks-stop-funding-mountain-valley>

"The institutions dumping funds into this unnecessary fracked gas project are just pouring their money into a 300-mile long money pit," said a Sierra Club staffer.

Editorial: Bold investment needed to modernize electric grid

- The Virginian-Pilot – 2/23/21

<https://www.pilotonline.com/opinion/editorials/vp-ed-editorial-electric-grid-0224-20210223-4rxhfwhc4ndprmzezt5quh6aq-story.html>

A system primarily constructed 60-70 years ago cannot be expected to meet the modern demands of a 21st century First World nation. The urgency of making our energy system more efficient, more resilient and more sustainable is undeniable.

ATC Rejects Mountain Valley Pipeline Opponents' Request to See \$19.5 Million Agreement

- The Trek – 2/24/21

<https://thetrek.co/appalachian-trail/atc-rejects-mountain-valley-pipeline-opponents-request-to-see-19-5-million-agreement/>

Related:

- <https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Press-Release-Hundreds-ask-ATC-to-release-MVP-Agreement-February-24-2020.pdf>

Blackjewel's bankruptcy is a harbinger of trouble ahead for the plummeting coal industry

- Courier-Journal – 3/3/21 (reprint from Inside Climate News, which has a subscription wall.

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2021/03/03/blackjewel-bankruptcy-illustrates-problem-zombie-mines/6898076002/>

Bonding requirements, supposed to provide funds for cleanup in the event of bankruptcy, are totally inadequate. The system we never designed for the entire industry to go bankrupt.

Dominion Cleaning by Greening, but Natural Gas Not a Goner

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 2/23/21

<https://www.naturalgasintel.com/dominion-cleaning-by-greening-but-natural-gas-not-a-goner/>

Important takeaway: "We have identified over \$70 billion of green investment opportunity between 2020 and 2035, nearly all of which will qualify for regulated cost of service recovery." – Tom Farrell. The ACP may be dead, but Tommy is still coming for your wallet! This highlights that the "public interest" clauses in Virginia's clean energy legislation cut both ways. We get clean energy, but with Dominion's price tag.

Dominion plans to build nearly 200 giant wind turbines off Virginia. But getting that energy into the grid won't be easy.

- The Virginian-Pilot – 2/27/21

<https://www.pilotonline.com/business/dp-nw-dominion-wind-transmission-20210227-ogxmgh6d65c2hm2jrmbefkuem-story.html>

Dominion seems exceptionally concerned (publicly) with making sure the public has a voice in in the 20-mile route of power cables for its offshore wind farm. Did they learn something from ACP? Or is it simply that the region has money (thus, people there *matter*)?

Big Picture:

Reversing Trump, Interior Department Moves Swiftly on Climate Change

- The New York Times – 3/2/21

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/02/climate/biden-interior-department-haaland.html>

As the Interior Department awaits its new secretary, the agency is already moving to lock in key parts of President Biden's environmental agenda, particularly on oil and gas restrictions, laying the groundwork to fulfill some of the administration's most consequential climate change promises.

FERC pipeline eminent domain fight heats up

- E&E Energywire – 3/4/21

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FERC-pipeline-eminent-domain-fight-heats-up-EE-Energywire-3-4-21.pdf>

A firestorm over eminent domain rights is brewing at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as public advocates, environmentalists and states call for changes to the agency's natural gas permitting process, while developers urge caution.

IEEFA U.S.: FERC to reconsider decades-old policy on assessing need for new interstate gas pipelines

- IEEFA – 2/22/21

<https://ieefa.org/ieefa-u-s-ferc-to-reconsider-decades-old-policy-on-assessing-need-for-new-interstate-gas-pipelines>

Commission asks for public comment on new pipeline construction decisions

House Energy and Commerce leaders unveil sweeping climate change legislation

- Politico – 3/3/21

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/03/house-energy-commerce-climate-legislation-473351>

The 981-page bill calls for a federal clean energy standard that sets an interim goal of 80 percent clean electricity by 2030 and 100 percent by 2035.

Biden's promise to unions: 'I'm all for natural gas'

- E&E Climatewire – 3/4/21

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Biden-tells-unions-I-m-all-for-natural-gas.pdf>

The Biden administration for weeks has been laying the groundwork for its legislative push on infrastructure, even as it publicly focuses on the COVID-19 legislation slated to pass the Senate in the coming days.

SCOTUS Rules Against Sierra Club in Environmental FOIA Case (2)

- Bloomberg Law – 3/4/21

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/high-court-rules-against-sierra-club-in-environmental-foia-cas>

Federal agencies aren't required to hand over draft documents related to the impacts of an EPA proposal impacts on endangered species, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

Texas grid crisis exposes environmental justice rifts

- E&E Energywire – 2/23/21

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Texas-grid-crisis-exposes-environmental-justice-rifts-EE-Energywire-2-23-21.pdf>

While the height of Texas' blackouts left more than 4 million homes and businesses without power, some experts say low-income areas and communities of color bore the brunt of much of the crisis.

Manchin says he'll vote for Haaland for interior secretary

- Associated Press – 2/24/21

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-manchin-will-vote-for-haaland-61cc396c9b179e97cdbaea573eb98796>

“I believe Deb Haaland will be a secretary of the Interior for every American and will vote to confirm her,” Manchin said in a statement. “While we do not agree on every issue, she reaffirmed her strong commitment to bipartisanship, addressing the diverse needs of our country and maintaining our nation’s energy independence.”

The US offshore wind boom will depend on these ships

- The Verge – 2/23/21

<https://www.theverge.com/22296979/us-offshore-ships-wind-boom-installation-vessels>

Top oil and gas lobbying group close to backing a carbon tax

- The Washington Post – 3/2/21

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/03/02/api-climate-carbon-tax/>

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry’s top lobbying arm, is edging closer to endorsing a carbon tax, a tool that would make fossil fuels more expensive, boost prospects for renewable and nuclear energy, and curb pollution that is driving climate change.