



ABRA Update #61 – January 6, 2016

NEPA Streamlining Bill Signed by President

A newly enacted omnibus bill that passed Congress in early December and has been signed by the President, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (H.R. 22), contains a provision to streamline the permitting process for transportation infrastructure, including pipelines. The 1,300-page bill includes a 60-page section entitled "Federal Permitting Improvement," with the following language:

...any activity in the United States that requires authorization or environmental review by a Federal agency involving construction of infrastructure for renewable or conventional energy production, electricity transmission, surface transportation, aviation, ports and waterways, water resource projects, broadband, pipelines, manufacturing, or any other sector as determined by a majority vote of the Council that is subject to [the National Environmental Policy Act] NEPA [and] is likely to require a total investment of more than \$200,000,000.

Further discussions of this portion of the legislation are available at:

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/01/01/during-paris-climate-summit-obama-signed-exxon-koch-backed-bill-expediting-pipeline-permits/> and <http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=33a19cd3-560e-4bea-8e39-35cd10dce1ea>.

The complete bill is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp114:FLD010:@1%28hr357%29>. The relevant section begins on page 1144.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Wintergreen Proposing New Routes

- FERC E-Library – 12/29/15
http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20151229-5311

Friends of Wintergreen Receives \$50,000 Challenge Grant

- Digital Journal – 1/4/16
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/2789836>

Companies want Virginia Supreme Court to reverse General Assembly's order

- The News Virginian - 12/25/15
http://www.dailyprogress.com/newsvirginian/news/companies-want-virginia-supreme-court-to-reverse-general-assembly-s/article_4a8da4a8-f878-50e0-ad5d-641d0f45524a.html
Might the rate freeze be unfrozen?

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

FERC wants more details about proposed natural gas pipeline tap in Franklin County

- Roanoke Times – 1/2/16

http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/ferc-wants-more-details-about-proposed-natural-gas-pipeline-tap/article_fb7304ec-514a-5804-8c5f-fe15991b756d.html

Critics complained about no local gas connection...now complain about local gas connection

Stonewall Gas Gathering pipeline complete and pumping gas

- The Exponent Telegram – 12/27/15

http://www.theet.com/news/local/stonewall-gas-gathering-pipeline-complete-and-pumping-gas/article_899cfe48-bbf8-5823-a3b8-4c5ae4495b37.html

Virginia DEQ Gives Preliminary OK to Columbia's WB XPress

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 12/31/15

<http://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/104870-virginia-deq-gives-preliminary-ok-to-columbias-wb-xpress>

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Big Picture:

Tennessee Gas Pipeline: Kinder Morgan Disputes Findings On Capacity, Addresses Other Concerns

- The Berkshire Eagle – 12/29/15

http://www.berkshireeagle.com/local/ci_29322049/tennessee-gas-pipeline-company-disputes-findings-capacity-addresses

Tennessee Gas stands by its plans and assessment...no surprise there

Feds block citizen web portal as key deadline looms in Kinder Morgan pipeline matter

- MassLive.com – 1/3/16

http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/01/pipeline_foes_call_foul_as_fer.html

FERC Intervenor Application page “down due to inclement weather”...for over three weeks?!

Elected officials seeking to slow pipeline proposal with state legislation

- SentinelSource.com – 1/3/16

http://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/elected-officials-seeking-to-slow-pipeline-proposal-with-state-legislation/article_2e640e46-ad9e-53a0-9f4d-b61bc4527c98.html

While state legislation cannot block projects outright, it can create a LOT of hoops!

Massive Gas Leak Points To Vast, Aging Natural Gas Infrastructure

- InsideEnergy – 12/23/15

<http://insideenergy.org/2015/12/23/massive-gas-leak-points-to-vast-aging-natural-gas-infrastructure/>

Most gathering and transmission pipelines built in 50's and 60's

Pipelines Face Possible Construction Delay

- WAMC Northeast Public Radio – 12/28/15

<http://wamc.org/post/pipelines-face-possible-construction-delay#stream/0>

Bird migration may stymie plans to get pipelines in service on schedule