



ABRA Update #111 – January 4, 2017

DEIS for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline: Sorry, Shallow and Incomplete

The [Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\) for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline \(ACP\), released December 30](#) by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), unfortunately exceeded –negatively - the already low expectations most people had for it. The 3-volume, 2,375-page document was prepared pursuant to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Written comments are due Thursday April 6. There will also an opportunity for people to comment in person at several public meetings; details on those will be forthcoming.

FERC stated that its purpose in preparing the DEIS was to:

1. identify and assess potential impacts on the natural and human environment that would result from constructing and operating the ACP;
2. describe and evaluate reasonable alternatives to the ACP that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the environment;
3. identify and recommend specific mitigation measures, as necessary, to avoid or further reduce/minimize environmental impacts; and
4. encourage and facilitate involvement by the public and interested agencies in the environmental review process.

The agency's identification of potential environmental impacts was generally comprehensive. But, its analysis and evaluation of those impacts, as well as its judgment about alternatives that the law requires FERC to consider, was seriously wanting. ABRA's Steering Committee prior to the release of the DEIS began to develop response plans. The committee confers further on January 5 to finalize plans to comprehensively analyze the DEIS and to develop plans for mobilizing concerned citizens and communities to become fully engaged in providing critical comments to FERC. [A press release jointly issued on December 30](#) by several ABRA member organizations (sent in a separate email to the ABRA mailing list that afternoon) discussed some of the shortcomings. Below are some of the conclusions that FERC staff articulates in the DEIS:

- “Because the Commission does not have a program for or direct the development of the natural gas industry's infrastructure, either on a broad regional basis or in the design of specific projects, and does not engage in regional planning exercises that would result in

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the selection of one project over another, we have determined that it would not be appropriate to prepare a programmatic EIS.”

- “Because a natural gas transportation project is proposed before the FERC, it is not likely that it would lead to additional drilling and production. In fact, the opposite causal relationship is more likely.”
- “Based on our review of Atlantic’s and DTI’s proposed construction methods, its implementation of impact avoidance and minimization measures, and our consultations with state agencies and other resource managers, along with our recommendations, we conclude that the potential for the ACP to initiate or be affected by damaging karst conditions would be adequately minimized. “
- “Concerns were raised regarding the potential for construction activities to intercept subterranean streams and “behead” the water source. We conclude the likelihood of intercepting a saturated karst conduit is very low.”
- “Based on literature reviews and discussions with real estate appraisers, we conclude that the ACP would not result in decreased property values.”
- “Based on the implementation of impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, we have concluded that the majority of impacts from construction and operation of the ACP, when added to the impacts of other projects, would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the environment.”
- “Based on an extensive review of publicly available information, we have found no evidence that karst hazards such as sinkhole development pose a safety or integrity risk to interstate transmission pipeline facilities. For these reasons, we conclude that the ACP would not significantly affect public safety.”

And finally, in one of the most outrageous passages in the DEIS:

- “Yogaville is located over 4 miles from the ACP and, therefore, we conclude no direct or indirect impacts on tourism to Yogaville would result from construction and operation of the projects.” (Note: Yogaville’s property line is only 150-yards from the ACP route, not 4 miles. Further, the Ashram at Yogaville would be only six-tenths of a mile from the ACP. The FERC staff is obviously geographically and geometrically challenged.)

Action Is Needed Now on VOF Consideration of ACP Easements Issue

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) Board of Trustees is scheduled to consider at its February 9 meeting in Richmond the request from Dominion Transmission, Inc. to permit the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to cross eleven Virginia properties on which the VOF holds conservation easements. It is crucial that those concerned with this unprecedented proposal let the Trustees hear their views. Letters that are received by Thursday, January 12 will be included in the pre-meeting packets that are sent to Trustees in advance. To obtain more information on the VOF easement issue, [click here](#).

Please write the VOF ASAP and urge the organization to:

- support the clean water, wildlife habitat, working farmland, rural character, and scenic views protected by the conservation easements,

- preserve the essential trust that exists between landowners and VOF, critical to the future of land conservation in Virginia, and
- deny Dominion's unprecedented and irresponsible request to permanently impair conservation values on 11 conserved properties.

Send your letters before January 12 to:

Brett Christina Glymph, Executive Director
 39 Garrett St., Suite 200
 Warrenton, VA 20186
 (540) 347-7727
bglymph@vofonline.org

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Feds say Atlantic Coast Pipeline will create jobs; opponents say it's not worth risk

- Charletson Gazette-mail – 1/3/17
<http://www.wvgazette.com/news-politics/20170103/feds-say-atlantic-coast-pipeline-will-create-jobs-opponents-say-its-not-worth-risk>

Long-awaited draft environmental statement on Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline released

- Richmond Times-Dispatch - 12/30/16
http://www.richmond.com/business/article_8e98ba37-dd42-51df-859d-0ebf2fa252a0.html
 FERC offers typical DEIS evaluation of ACP – “some adverse effects” that can be reduced to “less-than-significant levels”...the rubber stamp strikes again!
- Related:
- http://www.newsadvance.com/nelson_county_times/news/update-nelson-residents-atlantic-coast-pipeline-opponents-react-to-draft/article_a9ce1e2a-3b04-5d15-a31b-ea726992ba25.html
- <http://www.nbc29.com/story/34154616/federal-report-issued-on-proposed-atlantic-coast-pipeline>
- <http://bluevirginia.us/2017/01/ferc-well-fercs-big-time-atlantic-coast-pipelines-environmental-impact>

Dominion's Own Model Shows That 15,000MW of Solar Would Save Virginia Customers \$1.5 Billion

- The Energy Collective – 1/4/17
<http://www.theenergycollective.com/ivy-main/2395647/dominions-own-model-shows-that-15000mw-of-solar-would-save-virginia-customers-1-5-billion>
 Dominion's utility planning computer model came up with this option...not Dominion staff...they discarded it!

Where and how the Atlantic Coast Pipeline could affect what's along its route

- MetroNews – 1/2/17
<http://wvmetronews.com/2017/01/02/where-and-how-the-atlantic-coast-pipeline-could-affect-whats-along-its-route/>
 A run-down of FERC's DEIS and what it means for communities through which it is slated to be built

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Marty Chase: Oil calling the shots in new administration

- Charleston Gazette-mail – 1/2/2017
<http://www.wvgazette.com/gazette-op-ed-commentaries/20170102/marty-chase-oil-calling-the-shots-in-new-administration-gazette#sthash.E9WrA8Hd.dpuf>
 Expect 19th century solutions to 21st century problems from our friends in Washington

State, feds call for improved pipeline environmental impact statement

- Roanoke Times – 12/23/16
http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/franklin_county/virginia-s-deq-and-u-s-department-of-interior-call/article_be89bea6-4a36-5734-8d54-cbb5d03a634e.html
 DEQ, DOI, BLM blast MVP DEIS as “incomplete”, “insufficient”, overlooking hazards “that have not been assessed”.
 Related:
<http://augustafreepress.com/citizens-demand-unbiased-review-mountain-valley-pipeline-proposal/>

Standing Rock Part 2? 16,000 Sign Petition Demanding West Virginia Gas Pipeline Be Stopped

- Washington DC Patch – 12/22/16
<http://patch.com/district-columbia/washingtondc/standing-rock-part-2-16-000-sign-petition-demanding-west-virginia-gas>

Holmberg: Energy pipelines are necessary, scary

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 12/30/16
http://www.richmond.com/news/article_4eba6b6d-c455-589e-a2c8-23a751doeddf.html
 Remember: personal choices still affect the market that itself is used to justify pipeline expansion. Make choices that use less fossil fuels.

Big Picture:

Trump's Team Viewed as Pro-Business, Fossil-Friendly and Ready to Gut Obama Legacy

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 12/23/16
http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Trump_Team_Pro-business_Ready_to_Gut_Obama_Legacy.pdf
 Industry analysts' expectations confirm our worst fears

The Republicans Who Want Trump to Fight Climate Change

- The Atlantic – 1/4/17
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/01/green-republican/512111/>
 Making companies internalize the costs of fossil fuels while doing away with all energy subsidies...it's actually not a bad idea...getting it through Washington, however, would be a neat trick!

States Will Lead on Climate Change in the Trump Era

- The New York Times – 12/26/16
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/26/opinion/states-will-lead-on-climate-change-in-the-trump-era.html>
 Whatever he may do, Trump cannot keep the states from greening their economies and energy systems

Spectra delays \$3b N.E. pipeline project

- New Hampshire Union Leader – 12/28/16
<http://www.unionleader.com/article/20161228/NEWS05/161229273/1028/news05>
 Spectra's push to solidify commercial and legislative foundation for project will likely push in-service date to 2019

Atlantic Sunrise pipeline clears environmental hurdle

- Lebanon Daily News – 12/30/16

<http://www.ldnews.com/story/news/local/2016/12/30/atlantic-sunrise-pipeline-clears-environmental-hurdle/96002528/>

Favorable FEIS released for Sunrise...Williams Partners “pleased”

2017: Pipeline Resistance Gathers Steam From Dakota Access, Keystone Success

- Inside Climate News – 1/2/2017

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/21122016/trump-pipelines-dakota-access-keystone-xl-activism-opposition>

Donald Trump may promise to get more pipelines built, but activists are energized by the grassroots success of 2016 and vow to keep fighting

Tennessee Gas agrees to pay state \$640,000 for pipeline easement through Otis State Forest

- MassLive – 12/29/16

http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/12/tennessee_gas_pipeline_agrees.html

Though a pipeline’s right to eminent domain won out over a state’s constitution, Massachusetts did manage to squeeze a 1500% premium out of Tennessee Gas for its easement through protected lands

Related (sort of):

- <http://www.wvgazette.com/gazette-op-ed-commentaries/20170101/john-barrett-what-landowners-should-know-if-gas-company-comes-calling>

2016 was the year solar panels finally became cheaper than fossil fuels. Just wait for 2017

- Quartz – 12/26/16

<https://qz.com/871907/2016-was-the-year-solar-panels-finally-became-cheaper-than-fossil-fuels-just-wait-for-2017/>

Please pay no attention to the Concentrating Solar Power (CSP) plant pictured since solar PV is what is discussed