



ABRA Update #116 – February 10, 2017

VOF Defers Decision on Conservation Easement Proposal

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) Board of Trustees voted February 9 to defer until a later date a decision on the request from Dominion Transmission, Inc. for permission to allow the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to cross 10 properties with conservation easements held by the VOF. A specific deferral date was not established in the action. The VOF's seven-member Board meets three times a year, but a date for the next meeting has not been announced.

There was a large turnout at the meeting, with strong statements made from concerned landowners, easement holders and conservation groups from throughout the Commonwealth in opposition to the proposal. Dominion also made a presentation.

The VOF Trustees were to have taken the matter up last June, but consideration was deferred at Dominion's request. For more, see the Recorder story on the next page.

Gubernatorial Candidate Perriello Announces Opposition to ACP & MVP

Tom Perriello, a Democrat candidate for Governor of Virginia, announced this week his opposition to the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline. In a [video posted on his Facebook page](#), Perriello said:

“Virginia deserves better than two pipelines we don't need, with an \$8.5 billion price tag, when there is a better way. As governor, I'll fight to prevent the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines. We should reject these rusty ideas that risk Virginia's natural heritage and contribute to the threat of climate change. I will demand a better way that creates thousands of good paying clean energy jobs for Virginians. We are a state of innovators. We can't get stuck in the past.”

A former Member of Congress representing the 5th District of Virginia, Perriello is a resident of Albemarle County.

Dominion's Plans to Use HDD Challenged in Comments to FERC

The risk of failure for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to safely cross the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST) and the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) is “substantial,” according to [comments filed February 7](#) by the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition (DPMC). DPMC's filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is in response to FERC's Draft

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With your financial support we can continue to fight effectively
against unneeded pipelines through our region*

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Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the ACP. Plans previously filed with FERC by Dominion Transportation, Inc. (DTI) call for use of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and contingency use of direct pipe installation (DPI) if the HDD operation fails. The U.S. Forest Service has stipulated that any permit for ACP construction on National Forest lands will be conditioned on prior successful completion of the Blue Ridge HDD or DPI operations. The Forest Service has not yet acted on a pending permit application for the ACP.

Among points made in the DPMC comments are:

- The extensive earth disturbance on steep slopes that will be required for the proposed Blue Ridge HDD and DPI operations was not addressed in the DEIS. The area and amount of excavation required for construction of level entry- and exit-side workspaces are imprecisely specified as “proposed” and “to be determined by contractor.”
- The DEIS includes a Dominion claim that subsurface borings confirm expectations that the HDD drill path will be primarily through non-problematic solid rock. This claim, however, is contradicted by geophysical studies reported in previous Dominion submissions to FERC.
- FERC has not been responsive to comments seeking scientifically objective evidence that its generic requirements are sufficient to prevent water resource impacts during and after pipeline construction in the central Appalachian region.
- Should the HDD and DPI prove impracticable after ACP construction is underway and options for alternative routing are foreclosed, there will be an incentive for allowing an open-cut crossing of the ANST and the BRP.
- A revised DEIS is necessary to meet the information needs of multiple stakeholders, including the general public, the regulatory agencies, Dominion partners and investors, and affected property owners.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Decision on easement conversion for pipeline tabled

- The Recorder – 2/9/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Decision_on_easement_conversion_for_pipeline_tabled-Recorder_20170209.pdf

Many speakers shared their sympathy with the VOF board for facing tremendous legal pressure from Dominion and from opposing landowners and conservation groups.

Related:

- <http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org/2017/02/vof-board-defers-decision-atlantic-coast-pipeline-conversion-applications/>

- http://www.richmond.com/business/article_8ac2f328-de5b-54c1-8a35-18e91193b217.html

Pipeline opponents urged to fight on

- The Recorder – 2/9/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Pipeline_opponents_urged_to_fight_on-Recorder_20170209.pdf

Citizens advised that the ACP is not a done deal, despite powerful supporters in VA and Washington

Perriello comes out against pipeline, and in a shift, says he is skeptical of offshore drilling

- The Washington Post – 2/8/17

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/perriello-comes-out-against-pipeline-and-in-a-shift-offshore-drilling/2017/02/08/034c4cea-ee34-11e6-9662-6eedf1627882_story.html?utm_term=.17130c2616f5#comments

The Democrat's announcement came a week after a populist Republican running for governor, Denver Riggleman, appeared at the Capitol, calling for a ban on political donations from the state-regulated monopoly

Related:

- <http://augustafreepress.com/statement-dominion-perriello-opposition-pipelines/>

Atlantic Coast Pipeline granted access to survey 29 Nelson properties

- The News Advance – 2/6/17

http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/atlantic-coast-pipeline-granted-access-to-survey-nelson-properties/article_ob85d020-f1f6-5707-9f79-0022176f7bbe.html

Surveys of the 29 properties should take place in February

Session so far a 'mixed bag' on renewable energy

- The Roanoke Times – 2/4/17

http://www.roanoke.com/news/politics/general_assembly/session-so-far-a-mixed-bag-on-renewable-energy/article_ee002d63-bd3e-5b1f-99a6-794ee7841a9a.html

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Justice says he's going to make DEP stop saying 'no' to industry

- Charleston Gazette-Mail – 2/8/17

<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/news-politics/20170208/justice-says-hes-going-to-make-dep-stop-saying-no-to-industry>

"No matter what the request may be, I think the first words out of their mouths should be we're going to try with all in us to do what you want to do." – Governor Justice

Dominion Power Defends its Billion-Dollar Handout from Ratepayers, Squashes Dissent, Asks for More

- The Energy Collective – 2/8/17

<http://www.theenergycollective.com/ivy-main/2397998/dominion-power-defends-its-billion-dollar-handout-from-ratepayers-squashes-dissent-asks-for-more>

Dominion Resources plans to change name to Dominion Energy

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 2/6/17

http://www.richmond.com/business/local/article_c5f33ad6-75f5-5a5a-be5d-dbbfee119d05.html

But... "A rose by any other name..."

DEP sets hearings on MVP pipeline

- Charleston Gazette-Mail – 2/3/17

<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/news-business/20170203/dep-sets-hearings-on-mvp-pipeline>

Big Picture:

Departing Bay Urges FERC to Look Beyond Precedent Agreements in Pipeline Reviews

- Natural gas Intelligence – 2/6/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Bay_Urges_FERC_Process_Reviews_20170206.pdf

Federal regulators approve Appalachian pipelines before quorum dissolves

- Power Source – 2/8/17

<http://powersource.post-gazette.com/powersource/companies/2017/02/08/Federal-regulators-approve-Appalachian-pipelines-Marcellus-Utica-gas-before-quorum-dissolves-FERC/stories/201702080047>

Cabot Oil & Gas Corp., which took down its drilling program to one rig last year, is adding another this quarter...

"We just look down the road and think to ourselves, if these pipelines are going to come online, you're going to need the natural gas to get to them," Mr. Stark said.

Trump Team Has Ties to Atlantic Coast Pipeline Now Being Pushed by White House

- DeSmog – 2/6/17

<https://www.desmogblog.com/2017/02/06/trump-ties-atlantic-coast-pipeline>

Lots of lobbying going on over this project

Trump's no friend of the environment, but Congress is doing the real damage

- MinnPost – 2/9/17

<https://www.minnpost.com/earth-journal/2017/02/trumps-no-friend-environment-congress-doing-real-damage>

"...we need to keep our eye on the ball here – and that means paying close attention to congressional Republicans..."

Former Texas energy official in running to lead federal oversight panel

- Houston Chronicle – 7/7/16

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/article/Barry-Smitherman-former-Texas-energy-official-10915934.php>

Record described as mixed. "...Smitherman promoted renewable energy and energy efficiency but also failed to hold oil and gas companies accountable for violations of state laws,"

Keystone debate: Is there really a need for so many new oil pipelines?

- Seattle Times – 2/4/17

<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/dapl-debate-is-there-really-a-need-for-so-many-new-oil-pipelines/>

If all these projects are completed, the pipeline network could be significantly overbuilt, according to an analysis by Simon Fraser University professor Thomas Gunton. He found that the total pipeline network would have at least 51 percent more capacity in 2025 than is needed to carry Western Canadian oil.

'A Conservative Climate Solution': Republican Group Calls for Carbon Tax

- The New York Times – 2/7/17

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/science/a-conservative-climate-solution-republican-group-calls-for-carbon-tax.html?_r=0

Whatever the fate of the plan, it is a notable moment because it puts influential members of the Republican establishment on the record as favoring action on climate change.

- However, there's really nothing new here.

The 'New Normal' in America: Renewables Boom, Emissions Plunge and Consumers Save More Than Ever

- GreenTech Media – 2/8/17

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/us-consumers-are-spending-less-on-energy-as-clean-energy-booms-and-the-ec>

After decades of technology development, business model innovation and policy progress, the U.S. economy is now decisively growing -- independent of energy consumption and carbon emissions

Related:

- <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/318746-wind-tops-nation-in-renewable-energy-capacity-for-first-time>