

## Protecting the heritage, resources and economy of the Allegheny-Blue Ridge region

P.O. Box 685 • Monterey, VA 24465

(703) 298 - 8107

CONTACT@ABRALLIANCE.ORG

WWW.ABRALLIANCE.ORG



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To: Members of the West Virginia Legislature  
From: Lewis Freeman, Chair & Executive Director, Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance  
Re: Atlantic Coast Pipeline

I write on behalf of the 51-member organizations that comprise our coalition. The proposed Atlantic Coasts Pipeline (ACP) is under review by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The deadline for comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the ACP is April 6. Should you be considering expressing views to FERC on the ACP, I ask that you consider the following points:

- The ACP is not needed. Numerous studies have been conducted, including a 2015 U.S. Department of Energy study and a FERC staff report the same year, that there is sufficient capacity in existing pipelines to move natural gas out of West Virginia to customers and that the nation is headed toward a circumstance of too many natural gas pipelines. Many industry observers have echoed this view. PJM, the regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity for fourteen jurisdictions in the East, including West Virginia, North Carolina and Virginia, in its recently released 2017 forecast has reduced its expectations for future generating requirements for areas to be served by the ACP, thus diminishing the amount of natural gas claimed by the project's sponsors to be needed.

Furthermore, building new pipelines will become less necessary in the longer term because renewables (wind and solar), not natural gas, are the predominate source of new generating capacity being built in the nation. In 2015, the latest year for which figures are available, two-thirds of the new electrical generating capacity built in the United States were wind and solar projects. Only 30 percent of new capacity was for natural gas, down by one-third from the previous year. This is not a trend that will change, even if the ACP is built!

- The claims of new jobs that would be created by the ACP are grossly exaggerated. The sponsors of the ACP claim that the project "holds the promise of thousands of new jobs." This is not true! The jobs necessary to build the pipeline will be temporary, and the large majority of those will be filled by people from outside of West Virginia. The ACP's sponsors claim the project will create only 24 permanent jobs in the entire state, but that figure will be offset by employment losses to other affected economic sectors.

There are many examples of the economic harm that the ACP would bring to existing businesses in West Virginia. I cite one. Elk Springs Resort and Fly Shop, located in Randolph County, is one of the premier resorts of its kind in the eastern United States. Construction of the ACP would effectively cause Elk Springs to suspend operations for up to two years. Given the competitiveness of the tourism industry, it is questionable as to when and to what extent the business could regain and return to its current level of economic activity.

- Serious and permanent harm to West Virginia's natural resources would result from the ACP. The sponsors of the ACP claim that because the pipeline would be underground it would have no significant impact on the state's beautiful landscapes or adversely affect water and other natural resources. Such a claim is a myth! As we study the informational filings on the project it is increasingly clear that the quality of water resources in West Virginia will be seriously compromised by the ACP. Furthermore, a just-completed study by our coalition has concluded that in West Virginia a cumulative total of 19 miles of mountaintops and adjacent ridgetops would be removed by ACP construction. The serious impact of removing such ridgetops is twofold: 1) the negative visual impact it would have in altering scenic views would be significant; 2) the earth and rock removed from the ridgetops would seriously exacerbate the already major concern over erosion and sediment control associated with the project. Such mutilation of West Virginia should be of deep concern to all Members of the Legislature.
- The ACP would not serve the public good of West Virginia. Should the ACP receive approval from FERC, it would be granted the right of eminent domain to take private property for private gain. When a project is 1) not needed, 2) would result in negative economic impacts to affected businesses, communities and landowners, and 3) would bring serious and permanent damage to the state's natural resources, it is not in the best interest of West Virginia and its citizens.

I would be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you for considering our views.