



## *ABRA Update #168 – February 15, 2018*

### **Registration Open for March 3 Pipeline CSI Meeting**

ABRA is convening a special meeting on Saturday, March 3, from 1:30 to 5 pm at the Holiday Inn in Staunton, VA (152 Fairway Lane, Staunton, VA, located at the intersection of I-81 and Rt. 262) to explain details of the coalition's Pipeline Compliance Surveillance Initiative (CSI) and describe how interested individuals can participate in the program.

The meeting is open to representatives from all ABRA member organizations, as well as others interested in learning more about the program. There is no charge for attending, but registration is required. Afternoon refreshments will be provided.

To register, click [here](#).

The CSI will gather in-depth data about construction activities associated with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP). The program will initially focus on the mountainous areas of the route, where construction threatens water quality in the headwaters of some of the major watersheds.

The meeting will feature discussions on water quality data collection, observing and reporting violations of environmental standards, protocols that should be followed in information gathering and reporting, aerial reconnaissance by airplanes and drones, and a special ABRA hotline to report observed incidents. Results from the information gathered by the CSI will be shared with regulatory agencies and the media. Special training sessions and webinars are also being planned.

The agenda will also be a discussion on current and prospective legal challenges to the ACP by representatives of Appalachian Mountain Advocates and the Southern Environmental Law Center.

### **ACP Receives Army Corps Permit**

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline has now received authorization from all relevant Army Corps of Engineers offices to proceed with the project in accordance with the Corps National Permit 12 program. The Corps' Pittsburgh office issued its authorization with a February 7 letter, as reported on in *ABRA Update #167* last week. The Corps Norfolk, VA and Wilmington, NC offices issued their authorization letters on February 9. All of these approvals are part of a filing that Dominion Energy made with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on February 12, which is accessible [here](#).

*Keep up with new developments by visiting and liking us on [Facebook](#).*

*Please support ABRA's work by clicking [here](#).*

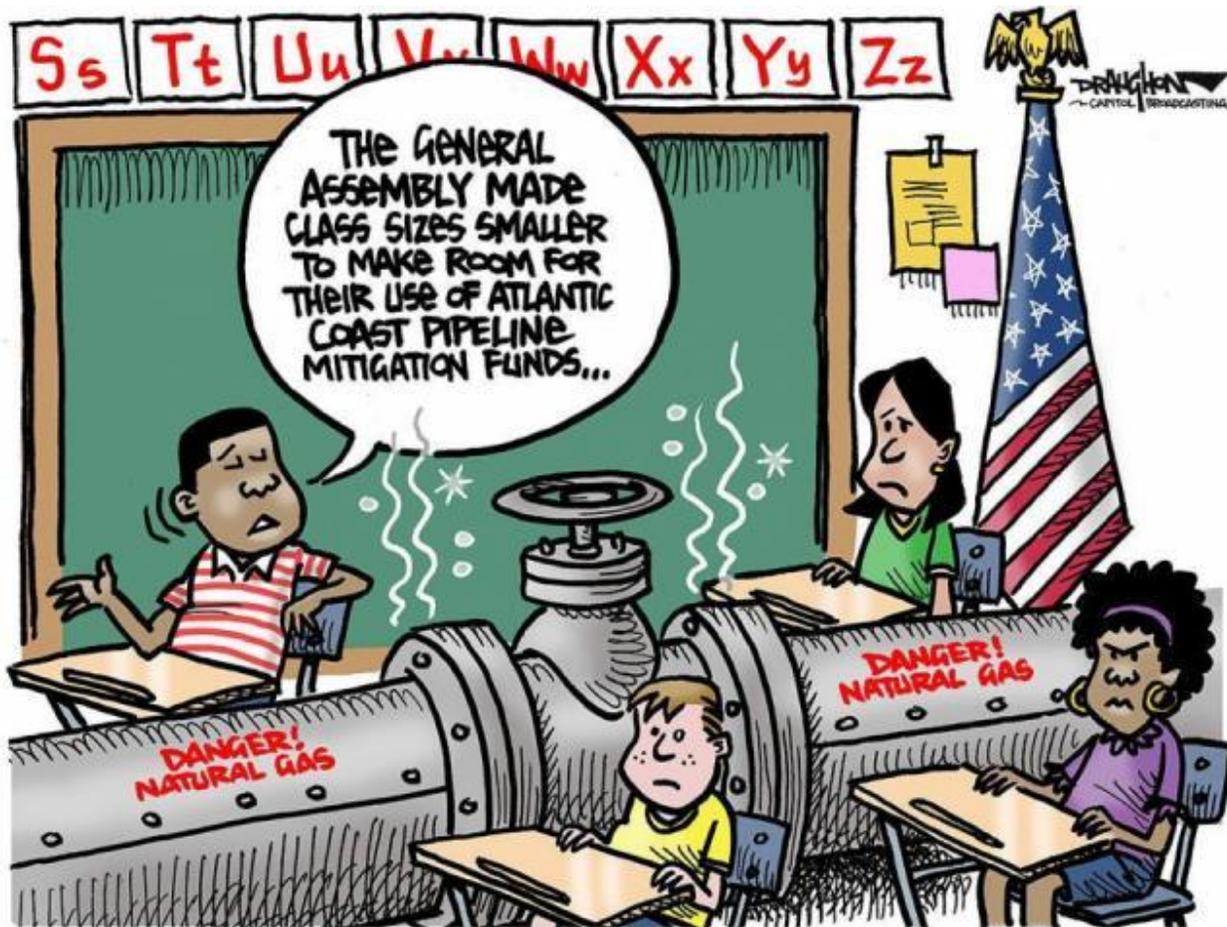
## Army Corps Sued Over Its MVP Approval

A coalition of clean water advocates has [filed a suit contending the United States Army Corps of Engineers improperly issued a crucial permit for the fracked gas Mountain Valley Pipeline](#). The suit was filed February 13 by Appalachian Mountain Advocates on behalf of a coalition made up of the Sierra Club, Appalachian Voices, Indian Creek Watershed Association, West Virginia Rivers Coalition and Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

Under section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Army Corps is charged with issuing a permit for the pipelines' stream crossings that allows the project's builders to trench through the bottom of those streams, including the Greenbrier, Elk, and Gauley Rivers, and fill the crossings with dirt during construction of the pipeline. Before the Army Corps can issue this permit, the state in which construction will occur must certify the pipeline's construction will not degrade the state's water quality. The permit issued to the Mountain Valley Pipeline by the Army Corps is commonly known as a "nationwide" permit, which takes a one-size-fits-all approach that can only be used when a state has done the necessary water quality analysis. Since [West Virginia waived its right to do that analysis](#), the Army Corps cannot legally issue the section 404 permit for construction of the pipeline in West Virginia.

If successful, the suit will require the Army Corps or the state of West Virginia to do another water quality impact review before the pipeline can be built through that state.

Meanwhile, in North Carolina . . .



## ***In the News:***

### **Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline**

#### **Atlantic Coast Pipeline receives key federal approvals**

- The News & Advance – 2/14/18

[http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/atlantic-coast-pipeline-receives-key-federal-approvals/article\\_c233029c-11d9-11e8-a360-7beedc710b31.html](http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/atlantic-coast-pipeline-receives-key-federal-approvals/article_c233029c-11d9-11e8-a360-7beedc710b31.html)

The Army Corps permits pave the way for more pre-construction activities along the route of the pipeline.

#### **FERC releases pipeline clearcutting pics**

- The Recorder – 2/14/18

[https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FERC-releases-pipeline-clearcutting-pics-Recorder\\_20180214.pdf](https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FERC-releases-pipeline-clearcutting-pics-Recorder_20180214.pdf)

#### **Second Nelson party sued by Atlantic Coast Pipeline under eminent domain**

- The News & Advance – 2/12/18

[http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/second-nelson-party-sued-by-atlantic-coast-pipeline-under-eminent/article\\_a04b4a2c-1053-11e8-a8e4-931f0b042cdc.html](http://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/second-nelson-party-sued-by-atlantic-coast-pipeline-under-eminent/article_a04b4a2c-1053-11e8-a8e4-931f0b042cdc.html)

ACP LLC filed suit against WPOA on Friday in the United States District Court's Western District of Virginia seeking temporary and permanent easements for about 7½ acres of open land close to the Augusta County border.

#### **House passes utility overhaul with crucial amendment aimed at "double dip"**

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 2/13/18

[http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/house-passes-utility-overhaul-with-crucial-amendment-aimed-at-double-dip/article\\_df4363ec-bb63-5e62-8cb2-b6979dd2a39e.html](http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/house-passes-utility-overhaul-with-crucial-amendment-aimed-at-double-dip/article_df4363ec-bb63-5e62-8cb2-b6979dd2a39e.html)

The amendment by Del. David Toscano, D-Charlottesville, the House minority leader, came a week after Gov. Ralph Northam, also a Democrat, endorsed the Dominion Energy-backed bill to move Virginia toward a "reinvestment model" that lets Dominion and Appalachian Power keep excess profits in exchange for the grid upgrades and spending on renewables, among other provisions.

#### **Pipeline site clearing to begin**

- Rocky Mount Telegram – 2/12/18

<http://www.rockymounttelegram.com/News/2018/02/12/Site-clearing-for-pipeline-set-to-begin.html>

The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality issued the remaining Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline last week, meaning Duke and Dominion Energy can begin clearing trees.

### **Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other**

#### **Environmental groups appeal Mountain Valley Pipeline permit**

- WV Metro News – 2/14/18

<http://wvmetronews.com/2018/02/14/new-lawsuit-filed-over-mountain-valley-pipeline/>

The groups, led by Appalachian Mountain Advocates, contend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers improperly issued a crucial permit.

#### **Mountain Valley Pipeline can begin more work on West Virginia on gas project**

- Platts – 2/13/18

<https://www.platts.com/latest-news/natural-gas/houston/mountain-valley-pipeline-can-begin-more-work-21318411>

The work, which the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved covers about 13 miles of the 301-mile pipeline route in Monroe County, West Virginia, as well as 45 additional temporary workspaces for the activities.

## The Fight Against a Pipeline Along the Appalachian Trail

- Backpacker Magazine – 2/12/18

<https://www.backpacker.com/news-and-events/mountain-valley-pipeline-lawsuit>

While some 58 pipelines already cross the AT, the MVP would run alongside it for almost 100 miles, and would be visible from some of the path's most visited and photographed vistas, including Angels Rest, Kelly Knob, Rice Fields and Dragons Tooth.

## Summers County to host March 15 MVP public meeting

- The Register-Herald – 2/14/18

[http://www.register-herald.com/news/summers-county-to-host-march-mvp-public-meeting/article\\_d5397844-5672-5218-b50e-d9412dbodd80.html](http://www.register-herald.com/news/summers-county-to-host-march-mvp-public-meeting/article_d5397844-5672-5218-b50e-d9412dbodd80.html)

The meeting will be on the stress added to the community in the form of infrastructure damages, added load to fire and emergency services, hospitals, health department and other infrastructure.

## Big Picture:

### Trump's top spy just contradicted the White House's line on climate change

- Vox – 2/15/18

<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/2/15/17016952/climate-change-security-threat-cia>

"The impacts of the long-term trends toward a warming climate, more air pollution, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity are likely to fuel economic and social discontent – and possibly upheaval – through 2018," Coats wrote.

### Insiders Provide Glimpse into Natural Gas Expansion During Pittsburgh Conference

- WV Public Broadcasting – 2/8/18

<http://wvpublic.org/post/insiders-provide-glimpse-natural-gas-expansion-during-pittsburgh-conference#stream/0>

"The short answer is exports are key for everything -- for crude, for natural gas and for NGLs and LPGs(Liquid Petroleum Gas)."

### Libertarian group eyes eminent domain reform on Capitol Hill

- E&E News – Energy Wire – 2/14/18

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Libertarian-group-eyes-eminent-domain-reform-on-Capitol-Hill-EE-News-Energywire-2-14-18.pdf>

Proposed Natural Gas Act amendments "...do not stop the construction of any pipeline or change FERC's criteria for how it decides what pipelines should be built. All it does is build in some procedural safeguards for the people who are most in need of it and have no way to cope with the resources that pipeline companies have."

### US natural gas pipeline approvals up 70% in 2017 as giant Northeast projects clear gates

- Platts – 2/9/18

<https://www.platts.com/latest-news/natural-gas/washington/us-natural-gas-pipeline-approvals-up-70-in-2017-10226434>

The dramatic rise in 2017 follows six years of growth in FERC approvals. Miles of pipeline winning approval more than doubled in 2017, hitting 2,739, up from 1,175 in 2016.

### Our Russian 'pipeline,' and its ugly toll

- The Boston Globe – 2/13/18

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2018/02/12/our-russian-pipeline-and-its-ugly-toll/KowQ7FBTGR756DqorYkwxN/story.html>

Food for thought. And a good reason to accelerate plans for offshore wind...which would free up a lot of gas now used for electricity production.

Related:

- <https://www.windpowerengineering.com/offshore-wind/adp-granted-ferc-approval-develop-ocean-grid-transmission-system-massachusetts/>

- [http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2018/02/senate\\_committee\\_advances\\_ambi.html](http://www.masslive.com/politics/index.ssf/2018/02/senate_committee_advances_ambi.html)

## **Can The Middle East Make A Success Of Renewable Energy? It May Not Have A Choice**

- Forbes – 2/14/18

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dominicdudley/2018/02/14/can-the-middle-east-make-a-success-of-renewable-energy-it-may-not-have-a-choice/#54ffea6e1da2>

Across the region there are plans to develop renewable energy schemes in at least 11 countries, from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east.

## **US Renewable Energy Generation Now ‘Within Striking Distance’ of Nuclear**

- Greentech Media – 2/15/18

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/renewable-energy-generation-nuclear-brief#gs.x5IgKZk>

The jump in renewable generation brings clean energy “within striking distance” of nuclear’s 20 percent generation contribution.