



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Matthew J. Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

October 16, 2018

Dear Members of the Governor's Advisory Council on Environmental Justice:

Thank you for your recent letter and your work to improve environmental justice in Virginia. Governor Northam and I share your commitment to ensuring the Commonwealth's public health and environmental protections are developed and implemented fairly. I understand the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) projects have raised concerns, and the Governor and I remain dedicated to holding these projects to the highest environmental standards possible pursuant to our state authorities.

We share your frustration over the fact that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) made decisions regarding siting, the use of eminent domain, and cost-benefit analysis for these pipeline projects without the kind of thoughtful review we would have required. These decisions preclude us from taking many of the actions that landowners, conservationists, and environmental justice advocates have asked us to take. Despite this, we have tasked the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) with ensuring that any permits or authorizations it proposes for these projects provide a heightened level of protection for air and water quality, particularly in communities most impacted and vulnerable.

With respect to the Buckingham compressor station, DEQ has held a number of public information sessions in the Union Hill community, and is continuing its public engagement. DEQ is focused on requiring that all federal and state health-based standards will be met on both a short-term and long-term basis. The Governor and I are watching closely to ensure that standard is met.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to addressing environmental justice concerns and your dedication as a Council to provide recommendations to the Administration. We look forward to your annual report and hope that it provides robust recommendations to develop and enhance environmental justice policies and procedures across a range of issue areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Strickler'.

Matthew J. Strickler