



ABRA Update #228 – May 2, 2019

Feds Issue Bulletin Warning of Pipeline Dangers in Mountains

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued on May 2 an advisory bulletin “to remind owners and operators of gas and hazardous liquid pipelines of the potential for damage to pipeline facilities caused by earth movement from both landslides and subsidence in variable, steep, and rugged terrain and for varied geological conditions.” The bulletin noted that “these conditions can pose a threat to the integrity of pipeline facilities if those threats are not identified and mitigated. PHMSA is aware of recent earth movement and other geological-related incidents/accidents and safety-related conditions throughout the county, particularly in the eastern portion of the United States.” The bulletin is available [here](#).

The PHMSA bulletin is being issued at a time when significant slope failures have been reported for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) in the area of West Virginia where construction was taking place until late last year when it ceased. The photo below, taken recently by the Pipeline Air Force of ABRA’s Compliance Surveillance Initiative, shows the degree to which slopes in a hilly area have failed in an area that has been cleared along the ACP right-a-way. The fallen trees are the result of the slope failure.



ABRA is currently conducting a study on landslides and pipelines, which will be issued soon. Over a dozen such incidents have already been detected by the ABRA/CSI program along the route in lower elevations of West Virginia. Stay tuned!

*Volunteer for ABRA’s
Pipeline CSI Program*

Volunteer

*Submit a report to
the Pipeline CSI*

Report

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Mountain Valley Watch Mapping Webinar Planned for May 7

Mountain Valley Watch (MVW), a pipeline surveillance program sponsored by the POWHR coalition, and Trout Unlimited are sponsoring a special free webinar on the MVW mapping system on Tuesday, May 7 at 7 pm. MVW was developed to allow for citizen oversight of the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, and to facilitate the enforcement of environmental protections and regulations during that process. The webinar will be conducted by Jason Shelton of MVW and will help participants learn how to leverage the MVW mapping system to assist monitoring efforts and take citizen oversight to the next level. Among topics to be covered are erosion and sediment control plans, aerial photos and locating and sharing information about established and potential water or visual monitoring locations. [Click here](#) for more info and to register for the webinar.



[May 17, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Richmond](#) (Click for details)
"End Environmental Racism Now: March With Union Hill"

Join members of the Union Hill community and others as we rally with Rev. William Barber II in Richmond. We'll march across the Robert E. Lee Bridge along the same route where 51 years ago, almost to the day, civil rights activists marched during Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic Poor People's Campaign for economic justice. This year, we'll be marching for environmental justice in Union Hill, a historic black community in Buckingham County targeted for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline's massive Virginia compressor station, and to stop all fracked-gas infrastructure in the state.

[May 18, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., Leesburg](#) (Click for details)
"Herring, Stand with Appalachia: No Mountain Valley Pipeline"

On Saturday, we'll head up to a rally in Leesburg to call on Attorney General Mark Herring to take every action within his power to halt construction on the Mountain Valley Pipeline. All work on the pipeline should stop while the Attorney General's enforcement case against the pipeline company is pending, and we will encourage Mr. Herring to pursue his lawsuit against MVP to its fullest and to affirm Virginia's authority to revoke the pipeline's certification. Speakers include Karenna Gore, Delegate Sam Rasoul, Delegate Chris Hurst, Professor Emily Hammond of George Washington University, as well as landowners and organizers from along the proposed pipeline route.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Atlantic Coast Pipeline Won't Be Finished Until 2021 – If At All

- NPR-WMRA – 4/29/19

<https://www.wmra.org/post/atlantic-coast-pipeline-won-t-be-finished-until-2021-if-all#stream/o>

Pipeline developer still optimistic about its project. Opposition vows to keep fighting.

Little Valley resident presses federal regulators for pipeline coating information

- The Recorder – 5/2/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Little-Valley-resident-presses-federal-regulators-for-pipeline-coating-info-Recorder_20190502.pdf

Property owners protest pipeline procurement process

- The Washington Post – 5/2/19

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/property-owners-protest-pipeline-procurement-process/2019/05/02/1c572dc8-6cee-11e9-bbe7-1c798fb80536_story.html

Federal law gives energy companies the ability to invoke eminent domain to build pipelines. But the Natural Gas Act, the law that governs the land seizures, provides no mechanism for companies to take possession of the land without first negotiating a price with the landowner.

Dominion Energy's new carbon reduction goal will mean slowdown in emissions reduction pace

- Energy and Policy Institute – 4/25/19

<https://www.energyandpolicy.org/dominion-carbon-reduction-slowdown/>

According to Dominion's data, the company reduced its carbon emissions at an average rate of 4% per year from 2005 to 2017, mostly by retiring coal plants in the later years of that period. That reduction rate plummets to 1% per year between now and 2030 under Dominion's new goal.

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

W.Va. DEP Changes State-Imposed Regs for Stream Crossing Permits

- WV Public Broadcasting – 4/30/19

<https://www.wvpublic.org/post/wva-dep-changes-state-imposed-regs-stream-crossing-permits#stream/o>

The changes include the removal of a 72-hour time restriction for construction of interstate natural gas pipelines under waterways in certain cases.

Equitrans Sees 'Inflection Points' Ahead As MVP Works Through Delays

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 5/1/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Equitrans-Sees-Inflection-Point-Ahead-as-MVP-Works-Through-Delays_20190501.pdf

Equitrans' CEO Thomas Karam remains "bullish" on MVP and said that the 300-mile, 2 Bcf/d pipeline would be a 50- to 80-year asset that's "going to be incredibly valuable to this company." Too bad it has less than zero value to all the people whose land they have taken for their private, profit-driven project.

"To Hell With Your Permits — Work Stopped At MVP Site In WV, Protester Charged with Felony"

- Blue Virginia – 4/25/19

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/04/to-hell-with-your-permits-work-stopped-at-mvp-site-in-wv-protester-charged-with-felony>

Mountain Valley Pipeline gets good and bad news on court challenges

- The Roanoke Times – 4/25/19

https://www.roanoke.com/business/mountain-valley-pipeline-gets-good-and-bad-news-on-court/article_56323c64-c5f5-5e12-a55f-e86efbb3e584.html

WVDEP changes rules for MVP river crossings, but the 4th Circuit ruling on ACP's crossing of the Appalachian Trail may pose a big problem for this project as well.

Big Picture:

New EPA document tells communities to brace for climate change impacts

- The Washington Post – 4/27/19

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/new-epa-document-tells-communities-to-brace-for-climate-change-impacts/2019/04/27/09cf8df6-6836-11e9-82ba-fcfeff232e8f_story.html

The report is at odds with the rhetoric of the EPA's own leader, Andrew Wheeler. It details how to deal with the aftermath of natural disasters that won't happen because, according to this administration, Climate Change isn't real.

Reps Overseeing Pipeline Safety are Profiting From Pipeline Companies

- Sludge – 5/1/19

<https://readsludge.com/2019/05/01/reps-overseeing-pipeline-safety-have-are-profiting-from-pipeline-companies/>

According to a Sludge analysis of financial disclosures, the members of the Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee have as much as \$2.8 million invested in fossil fuel companies that own and operate oil and gas pipelines, presenting significant conflicts of interest.

Feds warn companies on landslide hazards

- E&E News – 5/2/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Feds-warn-companies-on-landslide-hazards-EE-News-5-2-19.pdf>

Pipeline industry representatives say they already have detailed, established methods to avoid damage to their lines from landslides and other movement. Of course they do. Explain again MVP last summer, landslides occurring now on ACP, recent explosions, etc.?

EPA Decides Not to Regulate Fracking Wastewater as Pennsylvania Study Reveals Recent Spike

- DeSmog – 4/25/19

<https://www.desmogblog.com/2019/04/25/fracking-wastewater-disposal-health-pennsylvania-environmental-protection-agency>

The oil and gas industry has flooded Pennsylvania with over 380 million barrels of liquid waste from 1991 to 2017. And that flood has been picking up pace. One out of every seven of those gallons was produced in 2017 alone.

Only six TSA staffers are overseeing US oil & gas pipeline security

- ZDNet – 5/2/19

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/only-six-tsa-staffers-are-overseeing-us-oil-gas-pipeline-security/>

The report argues that the TSA's insufficient and poorly-prepared pipeline safety staff opens the door for physical and cyber-attacks, from the likes of terrorist groups, hackers, foreign nations, criminal groups, and activists alike.

Why Is China Placing A Global Bet On Coal?

- NPR – 4/29/19

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/29/716347646/why-is-china-placing-a-global-bet-on-coal>

As part of its Belt and Road Initiative, China is building or planning more than 300 coal plants in places as widely spread as Turkey, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Egypt and the Philippines. After all, Chinese engineers, metalworkers and laborers who built coal-fired power plants must be kept employed. And what better way to lure nearby nations into debt-based subservience than a huge, bad investment at a great price?

The one piece of *Good* news this week...

Renewable energy will surpass coal in April & May

- PV Magazine – 4/29/19

<https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2019/04/29/renewable-energy-will-surpass-coal-in-april-may/>

The volume of U.S. electricity generated by renewable energy is set to surpass that of coal for the first time in April and continue in May, according to U.S. Department of Energy data.