



## *ABRA Update #230 – May 16, 2019*

### **52 Groups Oppose Congress Acting on App Trail & BR Parkway Crossings**

Fifty-Two organizations, representing thousands of individual members in Virginia, wrote to the Virginia congressional delegation on May 16 urging them to oppose “possible federal legislation that would allow the highly controversial Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to be built across the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway.” The groups’ letter noted that “Dominion Energy is pressuring some members of Congress to consider legislation that could make it easier to build the ACP along the developers’ preferred route. Such legislation would be inappropriate given the ongoing review of the project by agencies and the courts.” Separate letters were sent to Senators Warner and Kaine (click [here](#) for a copy) and to the eleven Virginia members of the U.S. House of Representatives. ABRA and many of its member organizations were among the signatories to the letter.

### **Tech Firms Call on Dominion for More Renewables, Less Gas**

Ten major data industry companies, including Microsoft, Apple, and Adobe, have written Dominion Energy imploring the company to base its future electricity generation on renewables and to diminish its planned reliance on natural gas. [The companies’ May 8 letter](#) stated:

Given the significance of our growing and energy-intensive industry in relation to total energy demand in Virginia, companies’ data center energy interests should be taken into account in decisions regarding the future of the region’s energy infrastructure. In particular:

- Companies providing or using data centers want to power our operations with renewable energy resources like wind and solar;
- Data centers are at the forefront of innovative energy-efficient technologies to reduce the energy burden of our operations.
- Energy storage technologies are here today and should be integrated into grid planning.

<p><i>Volunteer for ABRA’s Pipeline CSI Program</i></p> <p><b><u>Volunteer</u></b></p>	<p><i>Submit a report to the Pipeline CSI</i></p> <p><b><u>Report</u></b></p>	<p><i>Stay informed, like us on Facebook.</i></p> 	<p><i>Support ABRA financially</i></p> <p><b><u>GiveNow</u></b></p>
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- Grid planners should take these points into account before building expensive fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

The tech companies' letter concludes:

Dominion Energy's re-filed proposed 2018 Integrated Resource Plan again fails to fully take into account the energy preferences of the data center industry—by limiting the amount of competitively procured solar energy, neglecting to consider energy storage as a cost-effective and beneficial energy resource, and continuing to plan for the development of additional natural gas infrastructure.

## Legislation Introduced to Boost Public Participation in FERC Processes

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) introduced legislation on May 15 to create an Office of Public Participation and Consumer Advocacy at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The [Public Engagement at FERC Act, S. 1477](#), will assist residential and small commercial energy consumers in participating in FERC proceedings, ensuring the public has a strong role in shaping the nation's energy future. Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Mark Warner (D-VA) are co-sponsors. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) will introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

Sen. Shaheen introduced a similar bill in the last Congress, which was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, as was S. 1477, but there were no hearings. It remains to be seen whether this new version will have a more positive fate.

## *In the News:*

### Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

#### Virginia Senators Urged to Protect Appalachian Trail

- The Grey Area – 5/16/19

<https://greyareanews.com/news/national/virginia-senators-urged-to-protect-appalachian-trail/>

More than 50 organizations from across the state called on Virginia Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner and Virginia's members of the House of Representatives to push back on Dominion Energy's political pressure seeking legislation allowing it to get around a decision by a federal court.

#### Court of appeals asked to reject 2nd pipeline permit

- The Recorder – 5/16/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Court-of-appeals-asked-to-reject-2nd-pipeline-permit-Recorder20190516.pdf>

Fish and Wildlife ignored new species data and presented other errors in the second permit, according to SELC attorneys. A ruling is not expected until August.

#### Tech giants pressure Dominion for more storage, renewables, less gas in Virginia

- Utility Dive – 5/14/19

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/tech-giants-pressure-dominion-for-more-storage-renewables-less-gas-in-vir/554692/>

The letter, which specifically references Dominion's IRP, asks Virginia power providers to take into account the sustainability goals of data center operators and to steer away from adding more cheap natural gas by using competitive procurement of renewable resources instead.

## **Solar + storage bypassed in Dominion Virginia's resource plan**

- PV Magazine – 5/13/19

<https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2019/05/13/solar-storage-bypassed-in-dominion-virginias-resource-plan/>

Plan has additional shortcomings, including not accounting for over \$7 billion in planned expenditures that had previously been announced to shareholders.

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

### **Mountain Valley agrees to pay \$266,000 for pollution problems in W.Va.**

- The Roanoke Times – 5/14/19

[https://www.roanoke.com/business/mountain-valley-agrees-to-pay-for-pollution-problems-in-w/article\\_ced1721a-7fc7-5c0b-91f5-b1c5b0a10efb.html](https://www.roanoke.com/business/mountain-valley-agrees-to-pay-for-pollution-problems-in-w/article_ced1721a-7fc7-5c0b-91f5-b1c5b0a10efb.html)

The agreement, outlined in a consent order from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, marks the first financial penalty for problems with storm water runoff caused by building a 303-mile pipeline that will also cross the New River and Roanoke valleys.

### **Virginia Could Really Use a Hero These Days. Attorney General Mark Herring Could Be That Hero.**

- Blue Virginia – 5/15/19

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/05/virginia-could-really-use-a-hero-these-days-attorney-general-mark-herring-could-be-that-hero>

See event flyer below.

## **Big Picture:**

### **How Utilities Stall Progress On Alternative Energy**

- Pacific Standard – 5/16/19

<https://psmag.com/environment/how-utilities-stall-progress-on-alternative-energy>

A new report from the Environmental Working Group claims that Duke Energy, the nation's largest utility, is holding back the transition away from fossil fuels.

### **Energy Regulators May Reconsider Rules Critics Say Fueled America's Oil and Gas Pipeline Glut**

- DeSmog – 5/13/19

<https://www.desmogblog.com/2019/05/13/ferc-energy-regulators-rules-oil-gas-pipeline-overbuild>

FERC, ultimately 'responsible' for preventing pipeline over-build and its related boom-and-bust cycles, may adjust the guaranteed ROE that helps to incentivize unnecessary pipeline construction. Maybe.

### **N.Y. Deals Critical Blow to \$1 Billion Shale Gas Pipeline**

- Bloomberg – 5/15/19

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-16/new-york-deals-critical-blow-to-1-billion-shale-gas-pipeline>

In-depth discussion below at NYT.

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/15/nyregion/williams-pipeline-gas-energy.html>

### **New CEO push on climate-change policy**

- Axios – 5/13/19

<https://www.axios.com/new-ceo-push-climate-change-policy-ofe0e915-5e83-4978-a62f-19458add8d1e.html>

A new coalition of more than a dozen major corporations and environmental groups is launching on Wednesday to urge Congress to pass legislation addressing climate change.

## Atmospheric Methane Levels Are Going Up—And No One Knows Why

- Undark – 5/13/19

<https://undark.org/article/methane-global-warming-climate-change-mystery/>

Human activity is involved at some level...that much is known. Humans produce the majority of methane emissions. But the scale and rate of recent *growth* leads to questions of whether additional factors are now coming into play.

## Trump Likes Fossil Fuels. Investors Don't.

- Bloomberg Opinion – 5/15/19

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-05-15/clean-energy-beats-the-market-as-trump-touts-fossil-fuels>

Dirty fuels providing dirt-poor returns. Clean energy investors seeing the light. And the money.

## Eight million jobs, \$9tn in spending: Jay Inslee's radical plan to tackle climate change

- The Guardian – 5/16/19

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/16/2020-jay-inslee-climate-change-plan>

The blueprint echoes progressives' Green New Deal, but with far more details and fewer commitments to social programs.

**Virginians for Justice:  
PROGRESS NOT PIPELINES!**

**May 17 - Richmond  
May 18 - Leesburg**

**Stop all new fracked-gas pipelines in Virginia!**

**May 17, 11am-2pm, Richmond**

End Environmental Racism Now:  
March With Union Hill  
Meet at Canoe Run Park

Join **William Barber III and Karena Gore** to rally and march across the Lee Bridge along the same route where civil rights activists marched 51 years ago, almost to the day, for economic justice. This year, we march for environmental justice in Union Hill, a black community targeted for a polluting, massive compressor station that is part of Dominion Energy's dangerous and unneeded Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

**#noACP**

 Search "Virginians for Justice"

**#noMVP**

**May 18, 1pm-3pm, Leesburg**

Herring, Stand with Appalachia:  
No Mountain Valley Pipeline  
Meet at Loudoun Co. Courthouse

We'll rally with **Rev. Lennox Yearwood**, president of the Hip Hop Caucus, **Karena Gore**, **Delegates Hurst, Guzman and Rasoul**, impacted landowners and others to call on Attorney General Herring to halt work on the MVP and pursue his lawsuit against the company for hundreds of water quality violations. Music, kids activities, refreshments, and more.

**Stop all new fracked-gas projects in Virginia!**