



ABRA Update #245 – September 19, 2019

Virginia Governor Calls for Electricity to Be 100% from Renewables by 2050

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam issued an Executive Order this week establishing a statewide energy production goal for 30% of the state’s electric system to be powered by renewables by 2030, and 100% of the system resources to come from renewables by 2050. Announcement of the action came on September 17 at a clean energy summit in Richmond.

The Executive Order directs the state’s Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to develop a plan to achieve the stated goals, which is to be completed by July 1, 2020. Among specific considerations set forth in the Order are: 1) targets for wind and solar energy production (5,500 megawatts by 2028); 2) increased utility investment in energy efficiency programs; 3) offshore wind energy capacity of 2,500 megawatts by 2025; and “measures that provide communities of color and low- and moderate-income communities access to clean energy and a reduction in their energy burdens.” The Order also mandates that the Commonwealth of Virginia “shall procure at least 30 percent of the electricity under the statewide electric contract with Dominion Energy from renewable energy resources by 2022.”

Reactions to the Governor’s proposal from environmental groups have been supportive, but with expressed concerns. Here are two examples:

We’re pleased that Virginia is joining other states that have pledged to take serious action on climate. But current state policies and plans for new fracked-gas infrastructure like the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines directly contradict the executive order’s ambitious goals.

- Tom Cormons, Executive Director, Appalachian Voices

Governor Northam’s commitment to a 100% carbon-free energy future by 2050 and 30% renewable energy by 2030 is one of the most ambitious climate action goals in the South. We applaud his efforts to lead by example at the state agency level, address environmental justice, and his commitment to workforce development.

But Northam’s order ignores the fracked-gas elephant in the room. If we are going to solve the climate crisis, we cannot continue supporting and investing in proposed fracked-gas pipelines like the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines. One place to start would be directing his Department of Environmental Quality to issue stop-work orders for those projects.

- Harrison Wallace, Virginia Director, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

For more details, including a link to the Executive Order, click [here](#).

<p>Volunteer for ABRA’s Pipeline CSI Program</p> <p><u>Volunteer</u></p>	<p>Submit a report to the Pipeline CSI</p> <p><u>Report</u></p>	<p>Stay informed, like us on Facebook.</p> 	<p>Support ABRA financially</p> <p><u>GiveNow</u></p>
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Who is ABRA?

This is the second in a series of profiles of member groups of the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance.

Highlanders for Responsible Development

Highlanders for Responsible Development (HRD) is a citizens' group that promotes stewardship of the unspoiled landscape, natural resources and exceptional quality of life of the Allegheny Highlands. It supports policies and activities that are based upon informed community discourse, democratic decision making, prudent land use and sustainable economic development. Organized in 2005 as a Highland County, Virginia group, HRD has recently expanded its Board to include representatives from surrounding communities in adjacent Bath and Augusta Counties in Virginia and Pendleton and Pocahontas Counties in West Virginia.

HRD was one of the founding members of ABRA and is a plaintiff in several of the legal challenges brought against the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP). In addition to its work on ACP issues, HRD supports responsible land planning, economic development that supports responsible use of natural resources, and low impact tourism that takes advantages of the county's natural attributes. HRD's mission is to work in the community as a volunteer force to help provide information to community leaders in the advancement of these objectives.

Several persons active in ABRA's leadership are HRD Board members, including Allen Jonson (ABRA's Board Chair and Chair of the Eight Rivers Council), Rick Webb (Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition), Mary Hodges (Voices from Bath), Dick Brooks (Cowpasture River Preservation association), Larry Thomas (Chair of West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and ABRA Board Treasurer), Bill Limpert (Bath County resident) and Lew Freeman (ABRA Executive Director), who serves as HRD Chair.

For more information on HRD, visit its website: www.protecthighland.org.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

DC Circ. Asks If 4th Circ. Ruling Kills \$7B Pipeline Fight

- Law 360 – 9/16/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/DC-Circ.-Asks-If-4th-Circ.-Ruling-Kills-7B-Pipeline-Fight_Law360_20190916.pdf

The D.C. Circuit has said it wants to know why it should still consider challenges to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of the \$7 billion Atlantic Coast gas pipeline now that the Fourth Circuit has invalidated the U.S. Forest Service's authorization for the controversial project.

Bath resident finds Dominion pipe coating analysis inadequate

- The Recorder – 9/19/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Bath-resident-finds-Dominion-pipe-coating-analysis-inadequate-Recorder20190919.pdf>

Virginia Ethics Enforcement So Weak It Can't Be Rated

- Bacon's Rebellion – 9/13/19

<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/virginia-ethics-enforcement-so-weak-it-cant-be-rated/>

The end result is nothing short of a national disgrace.

Virginia governor sets renewable energy goal of 100 percent by 2050

- PBS News Hour – 9/17/19
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/virginia-governor-sets-renewable-energy-goal-of-100-percent-by-2050>
- But, of course, there is no mention of the giant gas pipelines proposed and under construction. How ya gonna square *that* with zero carbon electricity, Ralph?
- Related:
- <https://www.virginiamercury.com/blog-va/northam-calls-for-carbon-free-electric-grid-by-2050/>

Renewable energy providers cleared to operate in Virginia

- Virginia Mercury – 9/18/19
<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2019/09/18/renewable-energy-providers-cleared-to-operate-in-virginia/>

EDITORIAL: Dominion shouldn't keep all overcharges

- Fredericksburg.com – 9/17/19
https://www.fredericksburg.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-dominion-shouldn-t-keep-all-overcharges/article_cdfc886a-6b3a-5b31-a25b-726b11a0c083.html



AN ACTION TO PROTECT THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL AGAINST UNWANTED, UNNECESSARY, UNNATURAL GAS PIPELINES

HANDS ACROSS
the Appalachian Trail
SEPTEMBER 28 & 29, 2019



Saturday, September 28, 11am-1pm
Humpback Rocks Visitors Center/ Milepost 5.8, Blue Ridge Parkway
Lyndhurst, VA 22952

Saturday, September 28, 11am-1pm
Giles County/Pearisburg: Route 100 intersection w/ AT (Trailhead)
2030 Narrows Road, Pearisburg, VA 24134

Sunday, September 29, 11am-1pm
Bears Den, 18393 Blue Ridge Mountain Road
Bluemont, VA 20135

Contact jessica.sims@sierraclub.org for more information

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

NC Slams FERC's Enviro Analysis Of \$468M Gas Pipeline

- Law360 – 9/17/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/NC-Slams-FERCs-Enviro-Analysis-Of-468M-pipeline_Law360_20190917.pdf

Pipeline opponents raise more concerns about environmental impact

- CBS19 News – 9/17/19

<https://www.cbs19news.com/content/news/Pipeline-opponents-raise-more-concerns-about-environmental-impact-560598411.html>

A representative of the DEQ said the state agency continues to log and investigate complaints involving erosion and sediment control, and its inspectors have issued notices for corrective action where required.

Pipeline protester found not guilty of assaulting security guard

- The Roanoke Times – 9/16/19

https://www.roanoke.com/news/crime/pipeline-protester-found-not-guilty-of-assaulting-security-guard/article_91d95951-f585-5014-8a90-54473164a8fe.html

The not guilty verdict for Jammie Hale, 47, of Pembroke, came in a Montgomery County General District Court hearing that showed a personal level to the ongoing controversy surrounding the natural gas pipeline, which is being built from West Virginia through six Virginia counties.

Big Picture:

BREAKING Trump Admin. Strips Calif. Of Auto Emissions Authority

- Law360 – 9/19/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BREAKING-Trump-Admin.-Strips-Calif.-Of-Auto-Emissions-Authority_Law360_20190919.pdf

Citing economics and competitive advantage, major firms argue against loosening government controls aimed at cutting carbon pollution.

Related:

- <https://ensia.com/articles/from-auto-manufacturers-to-tech-giants-companies-across-the-u-s-are-opposing-rollbacks-on-climate-change-regulations/>

Trump to pick agency lawyer to fill vacant seat – sources

- E&E Energywire – 9/19/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Trump-to-pick-agency-lawyer-to-fill-vacant-seat---sources-EE-Energywire-9-19-19.pdf>

NPS to superintendents: Opposed to drilling? Call us first

- E&E News – 9/19/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/NPS-to-superintendents-who-oppose-drilling-Call-us-first-EE-News-9-19-19.pdf>

"... this is nothing more than an intimidation tactic, deterring park experts on the front lines from expressing views that might contradict the administration's aggressive pro-fossil fuels energy policy," said Theresa Pierno, president and CEO for the National Parks Conservation Association.

Judge bars 'riot boosting' law aimed at Keystone XL protests

- E&E Energywire – 9/19/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Judge-bars-riot-boosting-law-aimed-at-Keystone-XL-protests-EE-Energywire-9-19-19.pdf>

Judge Lawrence Piersol slammed the law in his decision, pointing to three specific actions outlined in the statute as violating constitutional protections.

Dangerous oil and gas industry exemption slipped into highway bill

- The Hill – 9/17/19

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/461113-dangerous-oil-and-gas-industry-exemption-slipped-into-highway-bill>

Buried in this 510-page bill is an unrelated provision that would grant sweeping environmental exemption for thousands of natural gas, oil and wastewater pipelines – known as “gathering lines” – compressors and pumps on federal or Indian lands.

What It’s Like Living in One of the Hottest Cities on Earth—Where It May Soon Be Uninhabitable

- Time Magazine – 9/12/19

<https://time.com/longform/jacobabad-extreme-heat/>

Asked if recent summers should be considered the new normal in Europe, a climate scientist laughed, and said it would be far worse. That it would likely look something like Jacobabad.

Solar and Wind Power So Cheap They’re Outgrowing Subsidies

- Bloomberg – 9/19/19

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-09-19/solar-and-wind-power-so-cheap-they-re-outgrowing-subsidies>

The government aid renewable energy developers once relied on is fading away...and that's just fine.

Related:

- <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2019-can-renewable-energy-power-the-world/>

- <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/09/19/renewable-energy-is-cost-effective-says-michael-milken.html>