



ABRA Update #249 – October 18, 2019

Hampton Roads Planners Sideline ACP Endorsement

A proposal for the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission to endorse the Atlantic Coast Pipeline was set aside for further consideration on Thursday, October 17. According to the meeting agenda, the proposal had been the result of a briefing received by officials of local communities in the Planning District from Dominion Energy regarding “the critical importance of this project to ensure that the Hampton Roads region has available natural gas to support economic growth.” At the beginning of the Thursday meeting, the Commission chair noted the large number of communications that had been received in opposition to the proposal. The Commission then agreed to defer action on the endorsement proposal and refer the matter to a committee for further consideration.

ABRA sent out an action alert on the proposal this past Monday, as did several other groups. Thanks to all who generated communications to the Planning District Commission.

ABRA Alerts Feds to ACP Safety Problems

ABRA’s CSI program has provided more evidence to federal regulators of unsafe and non-compliant construction practices of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP).

On July 25, the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA) wrote Dominion Energy Transmission, Inc. (DETI), which is managing the construction of the ACP, concerning trench widths that did not appear to meet specifications and the presence of bedrock and loose boulders in pipeline trenches. The locations were within the first miles of the project in West Virginia. DETI responded on August 21 denying that the conditions cited by PHMSA inspectors existed. This prompted ABRA to examine the reported incidents base upon photographic evidence acquired by ABRA/CSI Pipeline Air Force photo surveillance flights.

In a [October 16 letter to PHMSA](#) , Dan Shaffer, ABRA’s Geospatial Consultant, brought to the agency’s attention photographs that contradict DETI’s contention. Shaffer explained that “CSI has identified 25 locations along the route that seem to show large rocks loose in the trench, directly underneath the pipe, incorporated with backfill, or protruding into the trench in close proximity to the pipe. . . . We are concerned that these conditions place the Atlantic Coast Pipeline at a significant risk of damage during hydrostatic testing, increased rates of corrosion due to damaged epoxy coating, or rupture due to landslides or even small slips.” One of the photo examples provided to PHMSA with the letter is reproduced below.

<p><i>Volunteer for ABRA’s Pipeline CSI Program</i></p> <p><u>Volunteer</u></p>	<p><i>Submit a report to the Pipeline CSI</i></p> <p><u>Report</u></p>	<p><i>Stay informed, like us on Facebook.</i></p> 	<p><i>Support ABRA financially</i></p> <p><u>GiveNow</u></p>
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9/19/2018 1122 MP 33.8 -80.203613, 38.908424 5,5 Shattered bedrock lines the trench.

Concluding, Shaffer said: “Our photographic evidence suggests that such conditions are common practice on this project. We feel that these locations warrant additional investigation to ensure that the project is being constructed in a safe manner.”

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Will Virginians be able to resist the Atlantic Coast Pipeline?

- The Washington Post – 10/11/19

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/10/11/will-virginians-be-able-resist-atlantic-coast-pipeline/>

You're damn right, we will!

Duke climatologist seeks a halt on gas-fired power plants, Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- The News & Observer – 10/10/19

<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/article235986533.html>

In a letter to Gov. Roy Cooper dated Thursday, Drew Shindell, Nicholas Professor of Earth Science at Duke University, takes aim at methane, a gas more efficient than carbon dioxide at holding heat.

Cooper staffers will testify on pipeline deal

- North State Journal – 10/16/19

<https://nsjonline.com/article/2019/10/cooper-staffers-will-testify-on-pipeline-deal/>

The ongoing investigation of Gov. Roy Cooper and his administration over a controversial settlement agreement involving permits for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is nearing its end.

Atlantic Coast Pipeline waiting on Supreme Court, but natural gas debate in SC continues

- The Post & Courier – 10/13/19

https://www.postandcourier.com/business/atlantic-coast-pipeline-waiting-on-supreme-court-but-natural-gas/article_683de852-e909-11e9-a3e1-e3f672f12a81.html

No applications have been submitted yet, but the battle lines are being drawn anyway.

Mud pollution clogged a drinking water system. Now, Dominion Energy is in hot water

- The State – 10/14/19

<https://www.thestate.com/news/local/environment/article236195328.html>

State regulators say Dominion illegally discharged sediment along a natural gas pipeline's 55-mile long route between Spartanburg and Lake Greenwood.

Commonwealth of Virginia, Dominion Energy Partner on Historic Renewable Energy Agreement

- Yahoo Finance – 10/18/19

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/commonwealth-virginia-dominion-energy-partner-130500962.html>

Related:

- <https://bluevirginia.us/2019/10/lots-of-questions-comments-about-gov-northams-solar-wind-power-announcement>

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Federal Court Stays MVP Authorizations, All Construction Poised to Stop

- Natural Gas Intelligence - 10/14/19

<https://www.naturalgasintel.com/articles/119877-federal-court-stays-mvp-authorizations-all-construction-poised-to-stop>

Related:

- <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2019/10/fourth-circuit-grants-stay-endangered-species-act-case>

Mountain Valley Pipeline agrees to pay Virginia \$2.15 million for environmental violations

- Virginia Mercury – 10/11/19

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/blog-va/mountain-valley-pipeline-agrees-to-pay-virginia-2-15-million-for-environmental-violations/>

The agreement leaves the door open for the state to impose further fines for future violations and to assess those penalties through “an expedited process.”

On energy efficiency, unfortunately, utilities remain in the driver’s seat

- Virginia Mercury – 10/11/19

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2019/10/11/on-energy-efficiency-unfortunately-utilities-remain-in-the-drivers-seat/>

With no incentive to spend ratepayers’ money wisely on effective energy efficiency programs, utilities give us more of the same...lip service to lofty goals, and more expensive power plants.

Big Picture:

FERC authority over carbon pricing in power markets may soon be put to test

- S&P Global – 10/16/19

<https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/electric-power/101619-ferc-authority-over-carbon-pricing-in-power-markets-may-soon-be-put-to-test>

Sounds boring. And it’s not a page-turner. But, the power to regulate carbon pricing in wholesale power markets is a big deal if you’re planning to incentivize...or kneecap...the transition to clean electricity generation nationwide.

White House sends Senate formal nomination for fourth FERC member

- S&P Global – 10/15/19

<https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/electric-power/101519-white-house-sends-senate-formal-nomination-for-fourth-ferc-member>

U.S. generates \$1.3T via 'green' economy — study

- E&E News – 10/15/19

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-generates-1.3T-via-green-economy-EE-News-10-15-19.pdf>

U.S. suffers 147 big blackouts each year. That's rising

- E&E News – 10/11/19

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1061245945>

Related;

- https://www.theepochtimes.com/blackouts-cover-ups-why-all-americans-must-work-to-secure-the-grid_3113953.html

DEP Pushes Back Again on PennEast Pipeline

- NJ Spotlight – 10/11/19

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/dep-pushes-back-again-on-penneast-pipeline/>

NJ shows the way to nearby states' executives and regulators who claim they no power over gas pipelines.

The Path to 100% Renewable Power Is Looking More Achievable

- Barron's – 10/15/19

<https://www.barrons.com/articles/renewable-energy-stocks-51571148477>

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which helps governments come up with plans to shift to renewables, has estimated that 86% of electricity can be generated with renewables by 2050.

Solar-plus-storage projects spreading across the U.S.

- IEEFA/S&P Global – 10/17/19

<http://ieefa.org/solar-plus-storage-projects-spreading-across-the-u-s/>

Related:

- <http://ieefa.org/regulators-approve-massive-battery-storage-project-to-replace-peaking-power-units-in-new-york-city/>