



ABRA Update #292 – September 24, 2020

Issue Highlights . . .

- Forest Service Releases Draft Supplemental EIS for MVP
- MVP Seeks Permission to Restart Construction
- FERC Is Asked to Conduct New Environmental Analysis for MVP
- New Report Details How Big Banks Have Propped up the Shale Industry
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Forest Service Releases Draft Supplemental EIS for MVP

The Supervisor of the Jefferson National Forest (JNG), Joby Timm, announced on September 25 the availability of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). The action is pursuant to a July 30 Notice of Intent from the Forest Service (see [ABRA Update of July 30](#)). The finalization of the DEIS is necessary for the MVP to obtain approval to cross the JNF. Supervisor Timm states:

The Forest Service published a Notice of Availability today that a Draft Supplement Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) is available for public comment. The comment period is for 45 days. The DSEIS analyzes the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands for the Mountain Valley Pipeline project, as well as associated project-specific amendments for the Jefferson National Forest Plan.

The Forest Service prepared this draft supplemental analysis to address the Fourth Circuit Court’s ruling, new information, and changed circumstances such as new Federally listed threatened and endangered species and critical habitat designations.

For more information on this Notice of Availability, please visit the [George Washington and Jefferson National Forests website](#).

Please submit comments about this DSEIS here: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=50036> or mail them to George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, MVP Project, 5162 Valleypointe Parkway, Roanoke, VA 24019.

For questions regarding the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, please feel free to contact Joby Timm at 540-265-5118.

The DSEIS will be published in the Federal Register, probably next week. A copy of the document is available [here](#). The comment deadline is November 2, 2020.

<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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MVP Seeks Permission to Restart Construction

Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP, LLC) has requested the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to authorize construction activities on the MVP to resume. Construction on the pipeline was ceased in August 2018 and again in October 2019 as the result of various legal challenges. In its [September 22 filing with FERC](#), MVP, LLC cited the following justifications for its request to resume construction:

- MVP has received all federal permits and authorizations for the activities it seeks to resume. The recent issuance of a new Biological Opinion by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is cited.
- Completion of construction is best for the environment. The company says that the project “is 92% complete, with 256 miles of pipe in the ground and 155 miles of final restoration.”
- Completion of construction is best for affected landowners. The company references communications that were filed with FERC by several landowners in VA and WV urging that the pipeline be completed.

MVP, LLC notes in its filing that work cannot resume in the Jefferson National Forest until it receives authorization to do so from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management. The USFS issued a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on September 25 (see separate article, above).

FERC Is Asked to Conduct New Environmental Analysis for MVP

Eight environmental groups have filed a request with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) asking that it supplement its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mountain Valley Pipeline project to address significant new circumstances and information bearing on MVP’s environmental impacts.” The August 27 filing cites several federal permits that the MVP project is missing. Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC responded with a September 15 answer contending that a new EIS was not justified. For a copy of the Supplemental EIS request, click [here](#); for a copy of the MVP response, click [here](#).

New Report Details How Big Banks Have Propped up the Shale Industry

A [new report](#) by Oil Change International and Rainforest Action Network shows how major banks have continued pouring money into fracking companies in recent years despite numerous warnings that the sector was financially unsustainable — on top of the well-documented environmental, health and climate impacts of the industry.

Fracking Fiasco reveals that financing for the fracking industry is highly concentrated, with Wells Fargo the biggest banker of U.S. frackers since the Paris Climate Agreement was adopted, and JPMorgan Chase a standout second place. The fracking industry has been hit hard by the pandemic, with dozens of bankruptcies so far this year, but its troubles long predate the coronavirus. The 51 U.S. fracking-focused companies analyzed in the report received \$224 billion in financing since the Paris Agreement was adopted (1/1/16 — 8/31/20), with almost 40% of that financing coming from JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo alone.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Toxic Coating on ACP Pipe Stored at Morgantown Industrial Park Needs Monitoring

- FrackCheck WV – 9/22/20

<http://www.frackcheckwv.net/2020/09/22/toxic-coating-on-acp-pipe-stored-at-morgantown-industrial-park-needs-monitoring>

Dr. Wallace Venable is Emeritus Associate Professor of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering at WVU and Chief Technical Officer of the Upper Monongahela River Association, also believe the pipe coating is an issue.

DEQ required Dominion to pay \$1.5 million for potential, actual damage from Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- The Progressive Pulse – 9/17/20

<http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2020/09/17/deq-required-dominion-to-pay-1-5-million-for-potential-actual-damage-from-atlantic-coast-pipeline/>

The payment, made in February 2018 to the Division of Mitigation Services, was part of a state program for impacts to water quality and stream and river buffers.

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Mountain Valley seeks to resume construction of pipeline

- The Roanoke Times – 9/23/20

https://roanoke.com/business/local/mountain-valley-seeks-to-resume-construction-of-pipeline/article_079f6eca-322d-5db4-889c-00de06493a90.html

Related:

- <https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MVP-request-to-resume-construction-Sept-22-2020.pdf>

FERC Nixes Rehearing of MVP Southgate Natural Gas Expansion, with One Dissent

- Natural Gas Intelligence – 9/17/20

<https://www.naturalgasintel.com/ferc-nixes-rehearing-of-mvp-southgate-natural-gas-expansion-with-one-dissent/>

Claiming Southgate would have no significant environmental impacts but refusing to assess the impact “on the most important environmental issue of our time is not reasoned decision making,” Democratic commissioner Richard Glick said.

43,000 signees opposed to MVP extension

- Kallanish Energy – 9/16/20

<https://www.kallanishenergy.com/2020/09/16/43000-signees-opposed-to-mvp-extension/>

The signatures were all from residents of West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina.

EQT bids for Chevron U.S. shale-gas assets in Appalachia – sources

- Reuters – 9/16/20

<https://www.reuters.com/article/chevron-divestiture-eqt-corp-exclusive/exclusive-eqt-bids-for-chevron-u-s-shale-gas-assets-in-appalachia-sources-idINKBN26804Y>

Two-year-long tree protest against Mountain Valley Pipeline to continue

- The Roanoke Times – 9/15/20

https://richmond.com/news/state-and-regional/two-year-long-tree-protest-against-mountain-valley-pipeline-to-continue/article_56cc2d3a-2549-5ece-ab24-d77886101cc7.html

Concerns over Coronavirus delayed the court until November 12 from hearing a motion for an injunction that would force the protesters from their tree stands.

Air Board beefs up public notice requirements for new fossil fuel plants

- Virginia Mercury – 9/18/20

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2020/09/18/air-board-beefs-up-public-notice-requirements-for-new-fossil-fuel-plants>

Some question whether the new regulations still fall short of what's necessary to protect vulnerable communities.

Big Picture:

Climate Disruption Is Now Locked In. The Next Moves Will Be Crucial.

- The New York Times – 9/22/20

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/climate/climate-change-future.html>

Managing climate change, experts said, will require rethinking virtually every aspect of daily life: how and where homes are built, how power grids are designed, how people plan for the future with the collective good in mind. It will require an epochal shift in politics in a country that has, on the whole, ignored climate change.

'Game-changer': FERC order opens door for renewables

- E&E Energywire – 9/18/20

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FERC-order-opens-door-for-renewables-EE-Energywire-9-18-20.pdf>

The order enables distributed energy resources, or DERs, to participate in regional wholesale energy markets, opening a new way for them to make money and potentially grow. DERs can include electric storage, distributed generation like solar, demand response programs, energy efficiency, thermal battery storage, electric vehicles and even smart appliances like dryers.

Gas companies abandon wells, leaving them to leak methane

- E&E Climatewire – 9/18/20

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Gas-companies-abandon-wells-leaving-them-to-leak-methane-EE-Climatewire-9-18-20.pdf>

Gas wells never really die. *Gas companies* do though, and often leave wells (even newly-drilled ones with potentially millions in untapped gas below the surface) unfinished, unplugged, or unused for decades...*if* they ever come back to them.

Analysis: World has already passed 'peak oil', BP figures reveal

- Carbon Brief – 9/15/20

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-world-has-already-passed-peak-oil-bp-figures-reveal>

In his presentation for the new outlook, BP chief economist Spencer Dale does say that it shows oil demand having peaked in 2019, but only in two of the three scenarios. For the "business-as-usual" scenario, he says demand is "more resilient" and recovers to "around its pre-Covid levels" by 2025.

However, Carbon Brief analysis of the outlook, combined with BP figures released separately in June, shows that oil demand would never surpass levels seen in 2019, when measured in terms of the energy it contains.

EIA Report – U.S. natural gas exports have been declining since April

- Oil & Gas 360 – 9/15/20

<https://www.oilandgas360.com/eia-report-u-s-natural-gas-exports-have-been-declining-since-april/>

China's Clean Energy Pivot Could Be The Death Knell For Coal

- Oil Price – 9/24/20

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Coal/Chinas-Clean-Energy-Pivot-Could-Be-The-Death-Knell-For-Coal.html>

How renewable energy can drive a post-COVID recovery

- World Economic Forum – 9/23/20

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/renewable-energy-drive-post-covid-recovery/>

We are now at a pivotal moment, as national governments design stimulus packages to reboot their economies. We simply cannot afford to return to "business as usual" and continue to pursue a high-carbon, unsustainable growth template. Rather, global recovery measures should target a green, equitable and resilient future.