

# The Recorder

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## Issues vary at pipeline open house

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**BY JOHN BRUCE • STAFF WRITER**



Elizabeth McClung told Federal Regulatory Commission contractor Jeff Mackenthun her concerns about the proposed pipeline's impact on water supply and quality. (Recorder photos by John Bruce)

MONTEREY — Worries over groundwater, security, scenic views, business practices and more were voiced during the Dominion Open House Jan. 15 in The Highland Center.

Monterey Mayor Rich Holman said Dominion has not answered his question about an assurance of water for the town’s municipal system customers.

“Why can’t we get an insurance policy on water if we lose our wells?” he asked. Dominion “needs to provide an insurance policy or bond if they’re certain that they’re doing it right. There’s no reason they shouldn’t do that. Instead of waiting until 2017, we need to see if they will give us an insurance policy. It has been intimated to me that they (Dominion) are self-insured,” Holman said.



Rick Lambert asked Dominion geologist Bob Denton, left, about the company’s approach to karst features.

Elizabeth McClung told Federal Energy Regulatory Commission contractor Jeff Mackenthun her concerns about the proposed pipeline’s impact on water supply and quality. Her property in Hightown between Routs 637 and Route 640 borders a parcel traversed by the proposed path. “We’re worried about the water,” McClung said.



“Why can’t we get an insurance policy on water if lose our wells?” Mayor Rich Holman, center, asked Dominion reps.

Mackenthun was one of the FERC representatives present to help in the environmental review for the project. The open house was part of a FERC pre-filing process for the Dominion project, docket number PF 15-6-000.

Rick Lambert of Monterey asked Dominion geologist Bob Denton about the company’s approach to karst features. Because the karst aquifer is a tremendous groundwater resource, the pipeline project has raised serious concerns over potential quality and supply issues.



Rich Lasko, left, told FERC project manager Kevin Bowman he was concerned about security.

Denton said during construction, whenever karst is encountered, every yard will be inspected by a geologist. He estimated karst features cover about half of the pipeline route through Highland. He said Augusta has much more, with about 90 percent of the proposed route overlying karst features.

Rich Lasko of Allegheny Mountain told FERC project manager Kevin Bowman he was concerned about security, the remote location, and the pipeline's vulnerability to terrorist attack. The isolated location and the thinness of the pipeline wall are potentially dangerous, Lasko said.



Philip Khnopp of the Augusta County Alliance said he had received more than 300 signatures out of his goal of 1,000.

“We don’t want to find out after the fact” that vulnerabilities could be averted, he said.

Hightown landowner Mike Hughes questioned Dominion’s business practices; he had driven to the meeting from his home outside Washington, D.C., to find out why he had not been notified his land was no longer in the pipeline path. Hughes said he was asked if Dominion was suing him, after an article in last week’s issue of The Recorder reported a person with the same last name was one of four landowners the company was taking to court for not allowing property access for surveying.



Carolyn Pohowsky and Sharon Hevener spoke to a Dominion rep about moving the route ways from the most scenic part of Dividing Waters Farm in Hightown.

Hughes said he would not have known about the open house had it not been for the article in The Recorder. He said he did not understand why he was not contacted. On checking in at the open house, he was informed he was not in Dominion's records. After explaining his situation to one of the Dominion representatives, he was told that at some time in the process, he would be notified, but that has not happened yet. He said he was not offered an apology.

Judy Skeen of Monterey made no secret of her opposition. "I've been telling them (Dominion representatives) what a load of harkey they're spreading," she said. "Nothing has made me so upset in the 37 years I've lived in this county."

Philip Khnopp of the Augusta County Alliance wrote a letter to the Dominion board of directors and was asking meeting attendees for signatures of support. He said he had received more than 300 signatures out of his goal of 1,000.

Carolyn Pohowsky said the most scenic portion of Dividing Water Farm is now in the proposed path of the pipeline. The path was adjusted, but Pohowsky and her sister, Sharon Hevener, determined the new route was just as, if not more, unfavorable than the first one that would have adversely affected a major sugar camp.

“We’re trying to get it moved,” Pohowsky said. A path farther south near the fence line would be preferable to the current path, she said.

Getting the project moved away from Highland to an alternative route has been suggested by Rick Webb of Mustoe, who said he was encouraged by FERC project manager Bowman’s comment that the agency will consider routing alternatives in the environmental review process. Webb recommended the existing Columbia Gas pipeline in addition to other alternatives.

Webb pointed to the Laurel Fork area of western Highland as a place that needs to be preserved and not developed. The area “has a remoteness and wilderness aspect that is exceedingly rare and increasingly valuable in today’s world. It is difficult to imagine a setting more inappropriate for industrial development,” he said. “The proposed pipeline would cross Laurel Fork and adjacent riparian wetlands areas.”