



ABRA Update #314 – August 5, 2021

Issue Highlights . . .

- Conservation groups support new SEIS for MVP
- FERC publishes a Draft SEIS for ACP restoration
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Conservation groups support new SEIS for MVP

Nineteen conservation groups filed comments August 2 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in support of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement regarding the request by Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC to change the method of crossing 182 waterbodies along the route of the company’s proposed pipeline.

The groups, which include ABRA and several of its members, said:

“The Commission must prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement—and cannot rely solely on an Environmental Assessment—to analyze the significant environmental impacts from Mountain Valley’s proposed certificate amendment and requested Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers . . . Moreover, FERC’s environmental review must examine, on a crossing-by-crossing basis, alternative stream crossing methodologies—including the broader use of trenchless methods. . . The Commission must also fully consider the cumulative effects of the hundreds of stream crossings proposed by Mountain Valley, including the combined effects of multiple crossings of the same stream or watershed, as well as the combination of effects from crossings with upland construction and effects from trenchless crossings combined with open-cut, dry-ditch crossings. Additionally, the Commission must revisit its analysis of the climate impacts of the MVP given new executive orders and the Corps’ involvement as a cooperating agency, and must seek certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from West Virginia and Virginia of any certificate amendment.”

The group’s filing was made in response to FERC’s July 1 request for comments on the MVP water crossings proposal. For a copy of the comments, click [here](#).

FERC publishes a Draft SEIS for ACP restoration

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) published on July 23 a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the restoration plans that have been respectively submitted for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the related Supply Header Project. A copy of the 700+ page document is available by clicking [here](#).

For background, see an earlier *ABRA Update* article [here](#). Public comments on the SEIS must be filed with the Commission by September 13, 2021

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The draft SEIS addresses a number of issues regarding environmental impacts of the submitted plans. However, one crucial issue not addressed by the SEIS was the restoration of easements to landowners. This issue was a focal point of the SEIC scoping comments filed in April by ABRA and many of its members. FERC staff told ABRA that it believed the EIS was not appropriate vehicle to discuss easement legalities, but that the Commission was aware of the issue.

In response to the release of the draft SEIS, ABRA issued the following statement:

The Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance is disappointed that the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for restoration of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline route does not address the important issue of requiring Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC to restore to landowners the full use of their property that was taken for a pipeline that will not be built. The scoping comments that we submitted in April to FERC, as well as those of many of our members, stressed this request. While we understand that FERC staff considers such an issue beyond the scope of the SEIS, we strongly believe that FERC has an obligation to affected landowners to address this issue since the easements in question exist only because FERC provided ACP, LLC the authority to take the land in the first place. We will continue to press the issue with FERC.

In the News:

Regional Issues

Federal review recommends leaving cancelled Atlantic Coast Pipeline pipe, felled trees in place

- Virginia Mercury – 7/27/21

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/07/27/ferc-review-recommends-leaving-cancelled-atlantic-coast-pipeline-pipe-felled-trees-in-place>

Draft analysis declines to weigh in on easement issue

Pipeline's plan to offset greenhouse gas emissions questioned by environmentalists

- The Roanoke Times – 7/30/21

https://roanoke.com/business/local/pipelines-plan-to-offset-greenhouse-gas-emissions-questioned-by-environmentalists/article_bb46c980-f17a-11eb-84c6-6fcf1344e5e8.html

Related:

- <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/powersource/2021/07/29/CNX-gas-coal-mines-environment-emissions-methane-Buchanan-Mine-Virginia-commodity-shale/stories/202107280070>

Lawmakers ask SCC to analyze Dominion rates with an eye on refunds for customers

- Virginia Mercury – 8/4/21

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/08/04/lawmakers-ask-scc-to-analyze-dominion-rates-with-an-eye-on-refunds-for-customers/>

Letter opens up new front in push to reform electric utility regulations.

Stop whining about solar panels — we need more now

- Virginia Mercury – 8/4/21

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/08/04/stop-whining-about-solar-panels-we-need-more-now>

"Farmers are not in business to provide their neighbors with a view. We are in business to produce food, fiber, fuel, fertilizer and a whole host of environmental services such as producing clean water, wildlife habitat and clean energy. If there were an income stream for providing views, we would certainly entertain that."

When Herring was in midst of primary, Dominion Energy gave \$200K to association helping his campaign

- The Roanoke Times – 8/2/21

https://roanoke.com/when-herring-was-in-midst-of-primary-dominion-energy-gave-200k-to-association-helping-his/article_d516e253-c908-523d-a62c-12d81a9278e7.html

Coal fuels less and less Virginia electricity. But when should utilities pull the plug on plants?

- Virginia Mercury – 7/30/21

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/07/30/coal-fuels-less-and-less-virginia-electricity-but-when-should-utilities-pull-the-plug-on-plants/>

When the utilities can no longer pass on the costs of operating economically unviable power plants, one can expect they'll be retired in short order. When will that happen...?

Wind farm planned for Botetourt missed deadline for approval, county says

- The Roanoke Times – 7/26/21

[https://roanoke.com/news/local/wind-farm-planned-for-botetourt-missed-deadline-for-approval-county-says/article_ea8d2580-ee24-11eb-874f-d30cd036292f.html`](https://roanoke.com/news/local/wind-farm-planned-for-botetourt-missed-deadline-for-approval-county-says/article_ea8d2580-ee24-11eb-874f-d30cd036292f.html)

Big Picture:

What to expect in the new IPCC report on climate change

- World Economic Forum – 8/5/21

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/08/ipcc-report-on-climate-change/>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will publish a new report on Monday Aug. 9. The report is expected to show temperatures rising more quickly than expected and show the long-term effects of increased CO₂ in the air.

CO₂ emissions set to hit record levels in 2023 and there's 'no clear peak in sight,' IEA says

- CNBC – 7/21/21

<https://www.cnbc.com/amp/2021/07/20/co2-emissions-will-hit-record-levels-in-2023-iea-says.html>

Only a small chunk of governments' recovery spending in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been allocated to clean energy measures. The report notes that although electricity generation from renewables "continues to grow strongly" it can't keep up with increasing demand.

Gas projects reveal FERC's environmental justice conundrum

- E&E Energywire – 8/3/21

<https://www.eenews.net/articles/how-fercs-environmental-justice-push-might-backfire/>

To some legal experts and environmental activists, FERC's analysis of the potential health and economic impacts of the projects on nearby communities was a textbook example of the agency's inadequate consideration of environmental justice issues.

FERC climate reviews: CO2 solution or chaos?

- E&E Energywire – 7/26/21

<https://www.eenews.net/articles/ferc-climate-reviews-co2-solution-or-chaos/>

FERC experts and environmental advocates say they're concerned that the agency lacks clear criteria for analyzing the greenhouse gas emissions of other gas projects.

Everything we know about Biden's mysterious CES

- E&E Climatewire – 8/2/21

<https://www.eenews.net/articles/everything-we-know-about-bidens-mysterious-ces/>

Carrots vs. Sticks. How innovative. How ineffective (if history is our guide).

Pipeline seeks emergency FERC approval after courtroom blow

- E&E Energywire – 7/27/21

<https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Pipeline-seeks-emergency-FERC-approval-after-courtroom-blow-EE-Energywire-7-27-2021.pdf>

Nobody knows how this is going to play out.

US wind industry hopes capacity market rule changes place breeze at its back

- S&P Global – 7/22/21

<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/us-wind-industry-hopes-capacity-market-rule-changes-place-breeze-at-its-back-65352391>

The case for climate change realism

- Axios – 8/2/21

<https://www.axios.com/case-for-climate-change-realism-extreme-events-c384a74d-b3d3-42ec-8e2a-d9862175c738.html>

It's getting harder and harder to communicate the two essential realities of human-caused climate change: that our failure to slow and eventually stop it is contributing to devastating human suffering all over the world, and that it's not too late to act.