

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/14/2017 11:00:00 AM
First name: Charles D. ("Dave")
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Atlantic Coast Pipeline Decision Objection

Dear ACP Objections Chief of the US Forest Service:

Please find attached as a .doc file my comments in opposition to Dominion's proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. In brief, it is unnecessary, destructive of the environment, and detrimental to public health. Three strikes and it should be out.

Respectfully yours,

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Re: Atlantic Coast Pipeline Decision Objection

Dominion Energy is a regulated utility monopoly that internalizes profits while externalizing its costs and risks to society. Nowhere is this operational model more evident than for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The risks to Virginians from this massive project[mdash]featuring hundreds of miles of 42-inch diameter pipe with gas pressures of 100 atmospheres[mdash]are enormous: potential explosions, particularly where the route traverses unstable karst geology; contamination of hundreds of smaller and larger waterways during and after construction; habitat and wildlife destruction in some of Virginia[rsquo]s most pristine wildernesses; destabilization of groundwater aquifers; and the potential of landslides in steep terrain along the pipeline

pathways, to mention a few.

Then there are the risks to our neighboring states. An often glossed-over fact is that the proposed pipeline will carry fracked natural gas from the Marcellus Shale Formation of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) have carefully tracked the health risks posed to communities subjected to fracking fluid's toxic (and carcinogenic) stew of chemicals. These scientific, peer-reviewed findings are summarized in two PSR publications available online for free: *Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction)*, 4th ed. (November 17, 2016); and *Too Dirty, Too Dangerous: Why Health Professionals Reject Natural Gas*.

Then there are the incalculable risks to the planet posed by fossil-fueled business as usual. Often touted as cleaner than coal or as a "bridge fuel," natural gas (methane) is itself many times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. During the extraction and distribution of natural gas, leakage into the atmosphere is inevitable. Moreover, our best climate science to date tells us that eighty percent of fossil fuels must remain in the ground if we are to have any chance at stabilizing the climate at 2C of warming, on average. Continued reliance of fossil energy, of any form, is a path to climate catastrophe.

Dominion Energy downplays these risks and promotes its pipelines by emphasizing "energy independence" and "job creation." In truth, neither energy nor economic concerns offer valid justification. Renewable energy is now cheaper than all conventional forms of energy, including natural gas. And the renewable-energy sector is creating jobs at a far faster rate than is the fossil-fuel industry. The big five high-tech giants—Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple—have all committed to renewable energy for their massive data centers. Specific to Virginia, by the end of 2017, a partnership pioneered by Amazon Web Services will add 180 megawatts of solar generation capacity for its cloud data facilities in Northern Virginia. For a sense of scale, that's enough electricity for 45,000 homes.

The real "justification" for the proposed pipeline—and for the eminent-domain grabs of private property from hundreds of land owners along the route—is that Dominion gets a higher rate of return on capital investments than it does on routine delivery of electrical power. Those capital costs are passed along to the consumer through rate riders, which jack up our utility bills by an average nine percent.

The bottom line: the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is good for Dominion stockholders and for almost no one else. Dominion gets away with public pain for private gain because, as the Commonwealth's largest contributor to both political parties, it has purchased the legislature's allegiance lock, stock, and barrel.

Please protect Virginia's environment and its citizens from bad ideas, such as the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which is both unnecessary and destructive to our environment, our health, and our well-being.

Thank you.