

Comments re: Mountain Valley Pipeline
February 8, 2023

This massive dirty energy project needs to be stopped. It would keep communities dependent on dirty fossil fuels for generations while jeopardizing sensitive rivers, streams, drinking water sources, the climate, and local communities. In addition, it is an egregious use of eminent domain by a private corporation to destroy property that some families in my county have owned for generations.

Construction on the pipeline has already severely harmed clean water sources across Appalachia. To date, more than 300 water quality violations have been cited by Virginia and West Virginia. Many residents of Montgomery County, Virginia, myself included, rely on water wells for drinking water. Contamination or endangerment of our wells is a major source of my concern regarding the construction of the pipeline. It is worth noting that North Carolina officials have denied access to the MVP proposed Southgate extension, citing unnecessary risks to high-quality waters and drinking water supplies.

No other large pipeline has ever been approved across so many miles of steep slopes and high landslide risk areas. Steeper slopes can mean more threats to clean rivers and streams as well as increased risk of pipeline explosions. Every time I read of a pipeline accident elsewhere, I cringe at the possibility of it happening here in our fragile ecosystem.

It has been estimated that greenhouse gas emissions (not including those generated during construction) would be almost 90 million metric tons annually. Rather than permitting such a dangerous project, we should be seeking to reduce pollution and investing in clean energy sources. Rather than investing in dirty energy for the next 40-50 years, we should be investing in solar or other renewable energy sources. As a Virginia Tech alumna, I work as a volunteer with students who tell me their greatest concern for our future is for our environment. We owe it to them, our children, and our grandchildren to do all that we can to protect our fragile environment.

My property abuts the Jefferson National Forest, and it is a resource I have been using and enjoying frequently for decades. It breaks my heart to see it endangered in any way. I urge Forest officials to uphold their Forest Plan and its standards for environmental protection, which are in direct opposition of the pipeline. As a resident of southwest Virginia, a region which increasingly relies on natural scenic beauty and tourism for economic survival, it is wrenching to see miles of trees destroyed and replaced by huge swaths of pipe and construction material. Our region can supply what many in urban areas need so desperately – a refuge from development and a place to engage with nature. Please help us preserve this vital resource.