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First name: Crystal

Last name: Cavalier

Organization: 7 Directions of Service

Title: Founder and Executive Director

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

My name is Crystal Cavalier. I am a citizen of the Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation. I represent myself and my family, and my organization, 7 Directions of Service and Missing Murdered Indigenous Women Coalition of NC, and I do not speak for my tribe. Much of the route goes through tribal lands, but because the federal government does not view Southeastern Tribes until recently as federal, most of our lands were taken away from us, stolen, put into national parks systems, or owned by private landowners. I also own land in Halifax County, VA. Currently, I live in Pleasant Grove, where my ancestors settled here in the area and began life in a mainstream dominant society, and was forced to stop any indigenous practices related to land, language, and culture. I am an indigenous water protector, a political scientist, and a mother. I am the founder and Executive Director of the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women Coalition of NC. This pipeline will go through Virginia's uranium range and areas popular for recreation, including hunting, fishing and people enjoying the outdoors. This pipeline will bring an expansion of methane gas in the region.

Our indigenous territories transcended county and state lines, but today I am discussing the injustices happening in the Southern, Western and Central area of Virginia. Many of where my ancestors are buried, and many where our people remain in their communities. I am specifically talking about how this fracked gas pipeline, like the Mountain Valley Pipeline, would impact national forest areas.

This pipeline is stationed in the traditional homelands of the Occaneechi, Monacan, Tutelo and Saponi Nations. Many county residents have amassed impressive collections of stone points, tomahawk heads, and pottery fragments. Somewhat rarer is mortar-and-pestle type grinding stones and various bone instruments. Also in the area, known to many, are the rock dams in the Roanoke, Dan, Bannister, Pig and Staunton Rivers, as well as surrounding streams, creeks and tributaries that helped catch fish.

All of Virginia was indigenous territory, and our people still live there today. Not once has anyone come out to speak to our people remaining. We are talking about Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

We know that many indigenous communities intermarried with Free People of Color. Due to the eugenics rules, the Racial Integrity Act of the 1900s, and laws, many indigenous people have been erased, silenced, and forced into a racial category that does not fit them all for the sake of land claims.

This is another example of an environmental racism attack on the Southeastern Woodland Tribes. We know that many times corporations like MVP and their investors, as well as local governments and businesses, do not take the time to do an environmental impact study on the people, environment, and area. If they do, they toss those items aside like rocks, oftentimes overlooking valuable pieces of my ancestors. Multi-million dollar corporations, such as the MVP and governments

are still trying to terminate people who have been living peacefully trying to co-exist in a government that does not value people who aren't of European American descent and falsely identify in the historically social hierarchy of white.

Many of these smaller communities are descendants of Native American tribes and freemen experiencing environmental racism from corporations, governments, and businesses.

Many of these problems face low-income communities, but race is often a more reliable indicator of proximity to pollution.

These communities are disproportionately burdened with health hazards through policies and practices that force them to live in proximity to sources of toxic waste, such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations, pipelines, compressor stations, major roads, and emitters of airborne particulate matter. As a result, these communities suffer greater rates of health problems associated with hazardous pollutants. As an indigenous person, our traditional homelands in VA and NC transcend boundary lines, and our local tribes had treaties violated by the European Colonies, and after the formation of the United States, our treaties were not even recognized. We never had a concept of owning land, property, material things.

Traditionally, we regarded the land as a communal resource, with ownership vested in the group, rather than in any one individual. We also believed that spiritual forces were everywhere, dwelling in heavenly bodies and sacred places on the Earth. Spirits lived within plants and animals. However, we were assimilated into European mentalities, and here we are today fighting against major corporations that do not value people, animals, plants, land, or the earth.

I hope that anyone reading this is in a position of authority and power, to continue to protect the people, land, and animals and stop this gas station from being built.