

Alexandria Democratic Committee Resolution on New Natural Gas Pipelines in Virginia

A RESOLUTION expressing concern about permitting pipelines prior to full evaluation of impacts, and calling for adoption of best practices for pipeline safety and accelerated investment in clean energy.

WHEREAS, Four new pipelines—the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), WB XPress, and Appalachian Connector—have been proposed to carry fracked gas through Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Safety, water quality, and a healthy environment are concerns common to all Alexandrians and to all Virginians; and residents of jurisdictions in the paths of the pipelines, supported by health professionals, faith leaders, scientists, and environmental groups throughout Virginia, have raised credible concerns about pipeline threats to water, public safety, livelihoods, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, The pipelines cross or abut numerous waterways and aquifers, introducing threats to drinking water sources, rivers, wetlands, and streams. Construction drilling has punctured aquifers, contaminating wells, and soil slippage into streams degrades water quality and disrupts tourism; and ¹

WHEREAS, The proposed pipelines and compressor stations will emit 95 million tons of greenhouse gases (GHG) per year, nearly twice Virginia's current annual emissions of 49.7 tons. Compressor stations also release methane, radon, and other toxins via leakage from valves and gaskets, exposing residents and workers to heightened risks of respiratory, neurological, developmental, and other diseases; and ²

WHEREAS, Construction operations damage the national forests and wild areas, clear-cutting trees, blasting away mountaintops, and leaving wildlife habitat fragmented, and the deep excavation required for 42" pipelines, especially on steep slopes, increases the likelihood of soil erosion and landslides; and ³

WHEREAS, Emergency protocols often prohibit first responders from fighting pipeline fires until the gas company shuts down operations; and the pipeline incineration zones encompass homes, schools, farms, roadways, and other populated environments, posing unacceptable risks of death or injury from pipeline or compressor station explosions caused by malfunctions, poor maintenance, or accidents; and ⁴

WHEREAS, The ACP and MVP will cost 300-800% as much as existing pipelines and, as Delegates Rasoul and Lopez point out, offer no savings to customers; yet no public need has been established in Virginia or other recipient states, where Dominion Energy and Duke Energy reported flat demand and estimated lower future demand. Existing pipelines will meet Virginia's needs through 2030, and Virginia has the opportunity in that time to develop other energy sources and efficiencies in flexible response to demand and supply, without locking the state for decades into a single source that carries so much risk; and ⁵

WHEREAS, Compressor noise and the flames and odors of venting gas degrade property values; few business owners or home buyers seek proximity to a pipeline or compressor station, while owners in the path risk losing their land to eminent domain in spite of the lack of public need for the pipeline; and

WHEREAS, The Virginia Water Control Board approved Section 401 Clean Water Act certifications for both the MVP and the ACP absent sufficient information to make a judgment. Key reports for the ACP that take months to produce are missing, but approval (with delayed enactment) went forward; the approval of the MVP permit with an amendment that allows the Board to evaluate stream crossings at some future date prompted a lawsuit from a coalition of environmental groups; and ⁶

WHEREAS, Weak government oversight and response increase the possibility of failure, explosions, fire, pollution, increased and uncontrolled emissions, and other negative outcomes, and often exacerbate them when they occur. States with pipelines lack comprehensive monitoring systems to measure released toxins and gas, and signs of maintenance failure show up repeatedly in accident records. Studies underway nationwide are investigating better ways to monitor and mitigate pipeline risks.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Alexandria Democratic Committee conveys to Virginia elected officials our grave concerns about the permitting of the MVP and ACP prior to a thorough evaluation of impacts and a comprehensive addressing of the concerns of Virginians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ADC recommends that Virginia elected officials support and promote legislation and other actions to ensure that Virginia adopts the highest standards and systems available for avoiding and mitigating risks during construction, maintenance, and use of pipelines, including: monitoring, maintenance, and enforcement requirements with teeth; setbacks to ensure existing and new structures and roadways are far enough from the incineration zone; baseline and periodic sampling in waterways and air along the pipeline of methane and chemicals released from the pipeline infrastructure; provisioning emergency responders with the necessary equipment and training for pipeline and compressor accidents, including specific information about handling chemicals that may be released; investing in comprehensive state-of-the-art monitoring systems for methane and contaminant emissions into air and water; investing in technology to reduce loss of methane to the atmosphere; and developing a way to ensure prompt and public reporting, response, and investigation of accidents, leaks, and other damages, including ensuring prevention and prompt mitigation of any damage to water, air, people, property, and the environment from pipeline construction, operations, or accidents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Alexandria Democratic Committee recommends that Virginia invest in and incentivize growth of renewables at a rapid pace, including solar energy, wind energy, and other low-cost and low-risk energy solutions including efficiencies.

Alexandria Democratic Committee Resolution on New Natural Gas Pipelines in Virginia

NOTES AND SOURCES

- *Sunoco halts drilling in Chester County where pipeline construction damaged drinking water wells*, 7/4/17
<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2017/07/14/sunoco-halts-drilling-in-chester-county-where-pipeline-construction-damaged-d> HYPERLINK "<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2017/07/14/sunoco-halts-drilling-in-chester-county-where-pipeline-construction-damaged-drinking-water-wells/>"r HYPERLINK "<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2017/07/14/sunoco-halts-drilling-in-chester-county-where-pipeline-construction-damaged-drinking-water-wells/>inking-water-wells/
Dominion cited for water pollution violations, *Pocahontas Times*, 12/3/2014 (at least 13 water pollution violations along pipelines in West Virginia between late 2012 and early 2014)
<https://pocahontastimes.com/dominion-cited-for-water-pollution-vi> HYPERLINK "<https://pocahontastimes.com/dominion-cited-for-water-pollution-violations>"o HYPERLINK "<https://pocahontastimes.com/dominion-cited-for-water-pollution-violations>"lations
- **NOTES:** A September 2017 NE Pennsylvania compressor malfunction discharged 210 tons of methane in two hours, more than most emit in a year. A Reed, PA FERC application for a compressor anticipated emitting 46.2 tons of nitrous oxide annually. NY compressors emit nitrogen oxides, CO, VOCs, formaldehyde, particulates.

Radon-222 Content of natural gas samples from Upper and Middle Devonian sandstone and shale reservoirs in Pennsylvania—Preliminary data: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2012–1159, Rowan, E.L., and Kraemer, T.F., 2012, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2012/1159/ofr2012-1159.pdf>

“Air Quality Concerns Raised as Gas Compressor Stations Multiply” 2/18/2012, Scranton Times-Tribune <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/air-quality-concerns-raised-as-gas-compressor-stations-multiply-1.1331314>

“Methane Emissions from Natural Gas Compressor Stations in the Transmission and Storage Sector: Measurements and Comparisons with the EPA Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program Protocols,” 2/10/2015 *Environmental Science and Technology*, copyright American Chemical Society <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es5060258>

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Permit Review Report for Algonquian Gas Stony Point compressor station http://www.dec.ny.gov/dardata/boss/afs/permits/prr_339280000100027_r2_1.pdf

- **NOTES:** Pipelines impact Appalachian Trail viewpoints, negatively affecting tourism and businesses. A 42” pipeline may pose difficulties in obtaining insurance for adjacent properties. Pipelines and compressor stations are slated to be built through or in historic districts and tribal cultural and historical sites.
- **NOTES:** The incineration zone (1400 ft in every direction for ACP and MVP) is the burn area if an explosion occurs. The links below describe some smaller pipeline explosions with heavy damages, and discuss some compressor station explosions and fires that resulted in death, injuries, and/or property damage.
<https://thecostofthepipeline.com/2015/08/18/what-a-pipeline-breach-looks-like/>
<https://thinkprogress.org/natural-gas-pipeline-explosion-levels-homes-in-kentucky-town-56b7d89aa40a/>
<http://wvmetronews.com/2013/06/07/ntsb-releases-details-about-sissonville-pipeline-explosion-investigation/>
<http://www.catskillcitizens.org/learnmore/RECENT%20COMPRESSOR%20STATION%20EXPLOSIONS%20AND%20FIRES.pdf>
- *Economic Costs of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline: Effect on Property Value, Ecosystem Services, and Economic Development in Western and Central Virginia*, 2/2016, Key-Log Economics, LLC
http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Economic_Costs_Of_The_Atlantic_Coast_Pipeline-KeyLogic_2-16-16.pdf
Economic Costs of the Mountain Valley Pipeline: Effect on Property Value, Ecosystem Services, and Economic Development in Virginia and West Virginia, 5/2016, Key-Log Economics, LLC
http://www.appalachianrail.org/docs/default-source/Conservation-Documents/advocacy/economiccostsofthemvp_technicalreport_final_20160518.pdf?sfvrsn=2
Who pays:<http://ieefa.org/ieefa-update-atlantic-coast-pipeline-risk-borne-not-dominion-duke-customers/>
Rasoul and Lopex: http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/lopez-and-rasoul-pipeline-not-worth-cost-to-virginians/article_ffd864e5-0114-5278-b0e0-e7e2cc09b8ba.html
- *Virginia agency takes unexpected step that could delay gas pipeline project*
<http://www.lmtonline.com/news/article/Virginia-agency-takes-unexpected-step-that-could-12425480.php>
Coalition lawsuit: <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2017/12/environmental-groups-challenge-virginia-s-unlawful-approval-fracked-gas>