

# Nelson County 13 year old Writes to FERC

Dear Ms. Cheryl A. LaFleur or To Whom It May Concern:

I am starting this letter with the phrase, "to whom it may concern," because I wonder who is concerned at FERC about me. I am a 13 year old resident of Nelson County, Virginia who is a child in a family that received letters from Dominion stating that they want to put a 42" industrial, high pressure, methane gas pipeline through our mountain farm as part of their newly titled, Atlantic Coast Pipeline. This is my perspective on this proposal and I hope that someone is concerned and will truly read this letter.

As a kid you have no power, so lots of times you feel helpless. Things happen that are out of your control, and you watch and absorb like a sponge taking it all in whether you want to or not. You are an observer as the adults in your world put images, ideas, and rules before you. As you grow you become influenced by what you observe and you react to these images and events, these laws, the words of the politicians who write those laws, and you form opinions on your society and the world at large. So whatever you place in the life of a child imprints them.

This week the UN Climate Summit convened and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said, "To ride this storm we need all hands on deck. Today we must set the world on a new course." All over the world people are awakening to the extreme threat of climate change and the devastation it will bring to our planet. This proposed pipeline project, the fracked gas it will carry, and its eventual use, whether in North Carolina or overseas, is not setting the world on a new course. This is NOT a bridge technology, but a continuation of the same fossil fuel mindset that benefits shareholders and big oil and gas companies while it destroys the environment which belongs to me too! It's a destructive force that is ruining my chances for a productive life and joyful future. I want to grow and be healthy. I want to have a family and my own children. Please think about this because it's a real issue for all the children of the world.

If we had no other alternatives it would be different. I have researched what other governments and countries are currently doing to expand the use of solar power especially watching the progress happening in Germany. I wonder who is delaying our progress and why? Solar is clean, renewable, and with our government's support, could be the power of choice of America. This pipeline is slated to cost 5 billion dollars. Think of what an investment of that magnitude invested in solar could mean for Virginia. If we had the political will, one that actually represented what our citizens desired, it would be more than possible.

Why do you think there is such resistance to these methane gas pipelines? There's a reason we have slammed the gate to Dominion in our county. By the way, some people have been told that they will benefit from this. They think they'll be making huge amounts of money. They have been lied to, or not told the complete truth. There seems to be some notion that rural people are stupid. Maybe that is why Dominion picked some of the most rural areas to ruin. We are the path of least resistance to them, we are the people with unreliable or no Internet and/or cell phone coverage. I see this clearly now. The impression is set in my mind. There is greed at the center of this and a strange ability that some adults have to think that some people are expendable. Building this pipeline is ensuring that we continue the destructive burning of fossil fuels because

once the infrastructure is there it will lock us in and delay investment in renewable energy. Time though, is no longer on our side.

Here in my county we have bakeries, wineries, breweries, arts and craftspeople, organic farmers, cheese makers, beekeepers, bed & breakfasts, flower growers, and families that run the farms that produce the meat, eggs and dairy for your table. After purchasing it with their lifesavings, my parents nurtured this property for years by planting hardwood trees, an orchard, an organic garden, and by raising grass-fed Katahdin sheep.

Just visit the Nelson County Farmer's market on Saturday mornings to see our region's bounty. Tourism is an extremely important part of our county too. It's beautiful here, with rolling hillsides, meadows, mountains, and clean rivers, lakes and streams. All of us depend on the rural beauty and clean water to continue these endeavors. To repeat a phrase put forth by our Governor, this project will be a "real game changer" to be sure. What is the real and honest definition of a strong economy? Isn't sustainability at the core of that definition? Does every place on the planet have to become an industrial zone?

Remember us. How we go as a county is how the rest of the planet will go. Destruction is not inevitable. I understand that you have to follow the rules set forth by the federal government, but we all know, including the kids, that it's stacked against the citizens. The laws for these pipelines have not been updated and so have not caught up with the boom of methane gas extraction that these corporations want to now transport/export, destroying more lives and more watersheds as if fracking weren't bad enough. I can see that the federal and Virginia state laws or lack of them, have made my parents feel like little children with no rights. I have never seen them like this before.

To whom it may concern ... is anybody listening to the kids? If you are still reading, I'm thankful, and I have one more thing to say. My vote counts, doesn't it? If it does, please know that rejecting this pipeline will give the message to Virginia's kids that some adults are facing the whole truth about the gas and oil industry and climate change. The emperor is naked.

Sincerely yours,

[Name removed for posting]