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Ms Kimberly Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

RE: Docket No. PF15-6, Proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline: Harmful impact on Nelson County, Virginia and Rockfish River Valley in Nelson County.

Dear Ms Bose,

I am writing to express my concerns about the harmful impact of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline on Nelson County, Virginia and the scenic Rockfish River Valley within Nelson County. As the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) may be aware Nelson County is home to the Wintergreen Resort and is widely recognized as one of the most scenic natural areas in Virginia. The Blue Ridge Parkway and Appalachian Trails trace the northern border of the County and the scenic Rockfish River Valley is home to the resort and numerous wineries, breweries, a distillery and large cidery. These water dependent industries chose to locate in Nelson County's Rockfish River Valley due to the unusually high quality of the available ground water. The combination of scenic mountain terrain and high water quality make Nelson County and it's Rockfish River Valley a unique and tourism dependent community. The proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline places all of these special features at risk. A risk that is both unacceptable and readily avoidable.

My wife and I are resident property owners in Nelson County and are extremely concerned about the potentially harmful and devastating effects of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline on the local environment and developing tourism industries. Please give careful consideration to the following:

Environmental Impact: The construction of the proposed pipeline will require a 100+ ft. clear cut "Right-of-Way" across steep mountain terrain transversing over 35 miles of Nelson County's watershed. The proposed route makes four crossing of the Rockfish River and crosses numerous other streams, wet lands and environmentally sensitive areas. Trenching, clear cutting and construction in these areas will be destructive and will place the watershed and it's ground waters at high risk of contamination. Further, the water needed for high pressure hydrostatic testing (>1400 psi) of a 42" diameter pipeline requires a tremendous quantity of water which is not available from local sources. Once used in testing, this water must then be discharged and disposed of. There are no suitable discharge areas. Again, a high and unacceptable contamination construction risk factor. When asked about these concerns Dominion's answers to date have been vague, evasive and unacceptable.

The underlying geological structure of Nelson County has long been recognized as being extremely unstable and susceptible to avalanches, landslides and failure of the steep mountain slopes. In August, 1969, the heavy rain of Hurricane Camille and soil saturation resulted in catastrophic failure of the mountainous terrain, causing avalanches, landslides, flooding and the loss of 152 lives. The avalanche scars on the mountain sides in the County are still visible. Various subsequent studies have reiterated the high risk of steep mountain slope failure in the event of heavy rains. The proposed pipeline route runs through Davis Creek, one of the areas most heavily devastated by Hurricane Camille. The devastation caused by Hurricane Camille and the potential for subsequent steep mountain slope failure are well documented and should be considered by FERC in its review process.

Economic Impact: Nelson County is a rural, mountainous, scenic area long treasured as one of Virginia's most beautiful counties. Within the past ten years the County has experienced significant growth in its tourism industry, especially so in the scenic Rockfish River Valley. During this period three breweries, six wineries, one large cidery and one distillery have opened in the valley. These new attractions and four other Nelson County wineries are drawing large numbers of new tourists. Organized 'wine tasting' tours are becoming common and supporting enterprises are springing up. In short, Nelson County's Rockfish River Valley is becoming a regional tourist mecca. One of the prime reasons for this recent upsurge has been the recognition of the exceptionally high quality of the available ground water: the 'life blood' of the brewing, distilling and wine making industries. The proposed route of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline crosses the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail and slices down the scenic steep mountains adjoining the Rockfish River Valley and runs most of the length of this narrow valley through prime agricultural and residential areas before it crosses the steep and unstable Lovingston Granite Gneiss terrain and ultimately the James River. The proposed pipeline clear-cut Right-of-Way will slash through this scenic area and scar the landscape. The more devastating risk is to the water shed and ground waters upon which the new industries rely. Should the water quality be affected, then all of these new industries face a huge and unacceptable economic risk.

Add to the above risks the 18 months of disruption during pipeline construction and you have the perfect recipe for financial disaster in the County. As FERC is aware, the construction of pipelines imposes very heavy and frequent truck traffic on areas adjacent to the construction project. Itinerant construction crews are further known to bring in increased crime, drugs and high traffic accident rates. Nelson County is primarily served by two lane roads many of which are very narrow and unsuited to heavy construction truck traffic. The Rockfish River Valley is especially so as the entire valley and Wintergreen Resort are served by one, dangerous, winding, two lane highway (VA 151).

In summary, I believe the environmental and economic risks to a tourism based economy are unjustified by the proposed pipeline. The ultimate objective of the pipeline is to enable the export of natural gas and its by products versus fulfilling a bonafide domestic need. I strongly urge FERC to disapprove the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

R. Craig Cooper

Copy to:
Dominion Board of Directors
Mr. Thomas F. Farrell, CEO of Dominion
Governor Terry McAuliffe
Senator Creigh Deeds
Delegate Dickie Bell
Nelson Supervisor Connie Brennan