

Negative Impacts to Water Quality Make Nelson County an Inappropriate Route

- Nelson County's unique geology increases the likelihood of negative impacts to water quality
 - Nelson is characterized by steep slopes with shallow soils over bedrock that are particularly prone to erosion, and landslides¹
 - The current route bisects our steepest mountains in the NW corner of Nelson and in the middle of the County
 - Sedimentation is the biggest pollutant of surface waters and negatively affects both aquatic life and drinking water quality²
 - Dominion has a poor record protecting surface water from sedimentation due to erosion³
 - Nelson's groundwater is near the surface, in fractures underneath the bedrock⁴
 - Blasting through the bedrock would be necessary and it would likely create channels that will drain significant numbers of wells and springs
- Nelson's residents rely almost entirely on our own resources for drinking water
 - All private water systems and most business water systems rely completely on groundwater from wells⁵
 - Over 90% of Nelson County residents get their drinking water directly or indirectly from streams that only flow seasonally, or after rain, or from headwaters⁶
- Nelson's economy depends on high quality water resources
 - Wintergreen Resort, the largest single employer in the county draws hundreds of thousands of people to Nelson County every year. They highlight both "Cascading streams" and "fly fishing" as attractions.⁷
 - Increasing number of farms, breweries and wineries require high volumes of quality water for production and successful branding. Nelson 151, the main business group representing local wineries and breweries chose a mountain stream as the most prominent photo on its website⁸
 - The owner of Blue Mountain Brewery, the oldest of three successful breweries in Nelson County, claims, "The clean water in this region is an integral part of the success of our brewery."⁹
- Nelson's water quality has significant downstream effects
 - We are a "headwater community." The headwaters of the Piney River, the Rockfish River and the Tye River are located here, and extend across nine watersheds.⁹

- Our 2,220 miles of waterways drain directly into the James River and ultimately flow to the Chesapeake Bay.⁹ The City of Richmond and three surrounding counties – Henrico, Hanover, and Chesterfield – obtain their drinking water from the James River. Approximately 500,000 residents in these localities are served by the James River (City of Richmond 2008)
- Many acres of forest ranked by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as “outstanding to very high quality” for wildlife and **water quality** are on the route of the pipeline in Nelson. Bisecting these intact, forest “green infrastructure cores,” with the pipeline would impair their water filtering function.⁹

References

1. <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/BSE/BSE-12/BSE-12.html>; Nelson County Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.nelsoncounty-va.gov/government/nelson-county-comprehensive-plan/>; Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District letter to FERC: http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20141211-5053
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