

To the Editor, Nelson County Times:

In August of 1969 Hurricane Camille ravaged our beautiful county. It wasted our land, ripped homes and buildings apart, contaminated our water, and caused untold misery and despair for so many Nelsonians in her path. I was a small girl at that time, yet I remember well the awful months that followed the storm: the smell of rotting timber, the roads left impassable, the mud that seemed to cling to everything, the sound of the helicopters overhead, the sorrow of families laying loved ones to rest. Now, forty-five years later, I watch as yet another disaster looms over my precious Nelson County. I watch as powerful corporations hover over innocent land owners. I watch the wealthy, silver-tongued business executives explain to the country folk how a pipeline will be good for us, to trust them, to put our very lives into their hands. Camille was a disaster of epic proportions that could not be avoided. The sad part of the pipeline tragedy is that this disaster is man-made, one we could avoid.

My family's lives changed drastically this summer. The requests for surveys started coming in May. Now I must witness my eighty-two year old father sift through the mountain of letters he has received from Dominion and from Dominion's high powered attorneys. It breaks my heart that his final years must be spent fighting a multi-million dollar corporation for his own land rights, or worse yet, that he may actually have to watch the destruction of his property when, heaven forbid, the pipeline is laid. He is the seventh generation to farm the land his family has so proudly passed down. Now he spends his days worrying. Will all the timber be destroyed? Will the timber that is left be unreachable due to easement constrictions? Will cattle ever graze peacefully again on the pastures? Will the streams that feed the wells and the animals become polluted with erosion runoff and chemicals? What will become of the creeks and springs that the pipeline will forever disturb? Will his children and grandchildren lie in harm's way should there ever be a leak or explosion from the pipeline? Will the blasting of dynamite crack the walls and foundation of the home place? How low will his property values sink? Will the serenity of the family cemetery be destroyed forever when the beast tears apart the land beside it? My heart aches for my father, a proud farmer who was a good steward of the land.

Prosperous Dominion shareholders and CEOs must be very pleased that their propaganda is working on some in my dear Nelson County. What

a luxury it must be to sit back in your home and explain to your neighbors how good the pipeline will be. Funny thing. No advocate of the monster seems to be holding a letter from Dominion explaining how the property they live on will be seized using the guise of eminent domain. The company, you see, is able to use "public good" as part of their theft.

When Dominion put out its glossy fact sheet recently to all Nelsonians, it conveniently left off a few major facts. The biggest fact of all is that neither they, nor any other power company, have ever attempted to construct a 42" pipeline on the east coast. Yet we are to "trust" them, believe that they will "protect" us. Currently Dominion is paying money for damages due to water contamination in West Virginia. Dominion claims that the pipeline will pose no danger to our citizens. Tell that to the folks in Appomattox where a much smaller pipeline exploded and leveled nearby houses. Dominion blusters that the pipeline will bring needed energy to our area. We will see no energy from this project. Remember, the line they hope to install is a transmission line only. Dominion continually reassures us that the natural gas will not be exported overseas, yet they are unwilling to put this in any written form. Another fact they choose to ignore is that jobs will NOT be created for citizens of this state. The survey crews that I have seen have been brought in from Texas. Why? Does Virginia not have able bodied surveying companies? And those who will construct the pipeline will be highly skilled pipe crews from many other states, not local or Virginia citizens. We cannot buy into the lies of this "reverse Robin Hood" mentality: steal from the common man and give to the wealthy, privileged stockholder.

Whether the man-made disaster comes or not, my father and I will always remain. We will never leave. We pray that Nelson County and its citizens will be spared from the nightmare that is the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. I am haunted by the words to a song, The Bypass, that Joey Davis once sang, "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

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