



VIRGINIA
CONSERVATION
NETWORK

May 16, 2019

Representative Don Beyer
1119 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ben Cline
1009 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Gerry Connolly
2238 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Morgan Griffith
2202 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Elaine Luria
534 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Donald McEachin
314 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Denver Riggleman
1022 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Bobby Scott
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Abigail Spanberger
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Jennifer Wexton
1217 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rob Wittman
2055 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Beyer, Cline, Connolly, Griffith, Luria, McEachin, Riggleman, Scott, Spanberger, Wexton, and Wittman:

We, the undersigned **52** organizations, with hundreds of thousands of members in Virginia, are writing to express our concern about possible federal legislation that would allow the highly controversial Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to be built across the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway. The ACP epitomizes many of the problems Representative Griffith and Goodlatte and Senators Kaine and Warner sought to fix with their bipartisan 2017 pipelines bill. In addition to threatening significant environmental resources, this project is costly and unnecessary, and it will burden property owners and ratepayers for the benefit of private interests. Legislation may also allow the equally controversial Mountain Valley Pipeline—which has already done significant damage to streams and rivers in Virginia—to cross the Appalachian Trail. We ask that you oppose any legislation that would bypass the developers' serious permitting problems and change existing law to allow pipelines to cross the Appalachian Trail on federal lands or cross the Blue Ridge Parkway.

We understand that Dominion Energy is pressuring some members of Congress to consider legislation that could make it easier to build the ACP along the developers' preferred route. Such legislation would be inap-

appropriate given the ongoing review of the project by agencies and the courts. So far, a federal court or the federal agencies themselves have vacated, stayed, or suspended *seven* federal permits required for ACP construction, and the case challenging FERC’s certificate of public convenience and necessity—the permit that approved the proposed route—is still pending. A bill like this could circumvent the normal regulatory process that determines where pipelines should be located and set the troubling precedent that developers can call on Congress to fix permitting problems for controversial projects that run afoul of the law. Our organizations continue to participate in the review process in good faith, as do many of our members, Virginia landowners, and other affected citizens and stakeholders.

Adding to our concern, Dominion Energy has failed to adequately describe the public need for the pipeline, and it is increasingly evident that the project is unnecessary. First, Dominion has not produced a study demonstrating that the ACP is a public necessity, instead relying on vague statements about “growing energy needs” in Virginia. But in December 2018, the Virginia State Corporation Commission rejected the utility’s Integrated Resource Plan, finding that the company has consistently overstated its energy demand forecasts. And in March 2019, Dominion submitted its newly revised Plan confirming Virginia’s trajectory away from fossil fuels—both coal *and* gas—towards clean, low-cost solar power. The revised Plan cuts the number of gas-fired peaking power plants nearly in half compared to the original Plan, further undermining the need for the ACP.

Dominion recently raised the projected cost of the ACP to \$7.5 billion. Even though the project is now \$3 billion more than when it was proposed, the company intends to recover its costs, plus an exorbitant 15% yearly profit, from ratepayers regardless of whether gas ever flows through the pipeline. Until the serious, fundamental questions about the need for the project are resolved, there is no reason for Congress to jeopardize sensitive, scenic, and treasured natural resources such as the Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Congress should not legislate the permits or routes for gas pipelines through national parks in Virginia. Please protect the Appalachian Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the interests of our many members in Virginia by opposing any federal legislation that would exempt the Atlantic Coast or Mountain Valley pipelines from normal process or clear the path for the building or siting of these controversial projects.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Appalachian Citizens’ Law Center
Appalachian Mountain Advocates
Appalachian Voices
Audubon Naturalist Society
Augusta County Alliance
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Center for Biological Diversity
Central Virginia Land Conservancy
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Chesapeake Conservancy
Cowpasture River Preservation Association
Defenders of Wildlife
Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition

FracTracker Alliance
Friends of Buckingham
Friends of Nelson
Friends of Wintergreen
Highlanders for Responsible Development
Jackson River Preservation Association
Land Trust of Virginia
Mothers Out Front
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
New River Land Trust
Piedmont Environmental Council
Pipeline Education Group
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Charlottesville Chapter
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Rachel Carson Council
Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Rockfish Valley Foundation
Scenic Virginia
Southern Environmental Law Center
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation
Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter
SouthWings
The Wilderness Society
The Friends of the Middle River
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Virginia Native Plant Society
Virginia Society of Ornithology
Virginia Wilderness Committee
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Wild Virginia
Yogaville Environmental Solutions