

Chad Oba- Friends of Buckingham
Testimony - People's Hearing
Washington DC
December 2, 2016

My name is Chad Oba, the co-founder of Friends of Buckingham a citizen's organization located in Buckingham county, Virginia. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline, FERC docket # 15-554, is a proposed 600 mile 42" gas pipeline running from the fracking sites in the marcellus shale regions of North Central West Virginia through several West Virginia counties and then running through western and central Virginia and southeasterly to North Carolina. Twenty five miles of the proposed line would run through Buckingham. We are the proposed site of the only compressor station in Virginia. A compressor station that has been increased in size three times to the current 53,515 HP capacity, almost triple the originally proposed size.

We were told by FERC, we would have a FERC hearing in our county and an additional one specific to the compressor station. The National Environmental Policy Act emphasizes the importance of the public participation process directing that each Federal Agency shall provide opportunities for commentary input in the process.(see C.Oba public comment to FERC- NEPA policy). We did not get a FERC meeting in our county. The meeting was held in another county, 45 minutes to an hour's drive away. Many of our residents are elderly and do not normally drive on a winter's evening let alone to a location so far away. Local public officials (see Buckingham's letter to FERC) requested of FERC a meeting in the county, as did Senators Kaine and Warner on our behalf. Senator Kaine in his letter to FERC: "In short, simply having a public comment process is insufficient if that process is not easily accessible to the public"(see Kaine letter to FERC). We received no reply from FERC. Later we found that our comments were not transcribed accurately with many mistakes that made large portions of our testimonies seem nonsensical. It seemed the FERC representatives did not take our comments seriously.

We are also especially concerned about historic resources located in Buckingham and the seemingly inadequate consideration they have received during the Section 106 process leaving them in a particularly threatened position. In effect our existence as a viable historic site has been erased from the FERC docket.

The 68-acre parcel purchased for this compressor station was once part of the Variety Shade Plantation in Buckingham County and lies in the middle of the historic African-American community of Union Hill. The existence of this plantation and the 92% post-Emancipation African-American community would indicate that historic sites exist in this area; however, at this point in the process, we are unable to obtain reliable, official information about the compressor station site and its potential impact on historic resources.

Briefly our concerns are: (see Union Hill comment and LF FERC letter)

CONCERN #1: CONSULTING PARTY STATUS

Preservation Virginia, the nation's oldest historic preservation organization, was denied consulting party status for Section 106. Representatives for the Yogaville Historic District and the Union Hill/Woods Corner Historic District also were denied consulting party statuses by FERC.

CONCERN #2: INCOMPLETE HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEYS IN BUCKINGHAM COUNTY AS COMPARED WITH OTHER ACP-IMPACTED COUNTIES IN VIRGINIA

Fairly large gaps (up to 4 miles) exist where no sites appear to have been recorded (see Attachment 7: VCRIS Map of Buckingham County Historic Resources).
on the Buckingham County side.

CONCERN #3: ADVERSE EFFECTS ON PLANTATION-ERA SLAVE AND POST-EMANCIPATION AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC RESOURCES BY COMPRESSOR STATION SITING

Most recent FERC "supplemental filings" that pertain to Buckingham's cultural resources reveals no historic resources for the compressor station site and its environs. (see Attachment 13: Union Hill comment June 2, 2016).

CONCERN #4: YOGAVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT AND THE SECTION 106 PROCESS

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources deemed the Yogaville Historic District (the non-profit spiritual community Satchidananda Ashram Yogaville) eligible for nomination as a National Register Historic District. This internationally recognized yoga community and its historical designation has not been considered in the section 106 process.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these concerns.