

Testimony of Ernie Reed, President of Friends of Nelson
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My name is Ernie Reed and I am the President of Friends of Nelson. Friends of Nelson is a community membership organization, centered in Nelson County, Virginia, with the express purpose of stopping Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Driven by a sense of community empowerment and solidarity with other communities fighting similar fights, we are involved in intervening in 4 pipeline projects that we consider unjust and unnecessary and stand with all of you today giving testimony on the runaway train that FERC has unleashed upon the landscape and on our communities.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's schedule for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline application calls for a draft Environmental Impact Statement to be issued any day now. But there are so many unanswered directives and questions for Dominion, which is spearheading the pipeline's construction, that it seems impossible to finish an EIS anytime soon. If the DEIS for the Mountain Valley Pipeline is any indicator, FERC appears willing for the draft statement to be left incomplete and virtually meaningless.

Recently issued documents from the U.S. Forest Service lists more than 450 items the USFS found deficient or poorly explained in Dominion's submitted resource reports. Building the pipeline in the karst topography of these mountains has long been a hot-button issue for those who live here and depend on the natural flows of their drinking water. The USFS has demanded far more information from Dominion on how the company will handle construction in this terrain.

The USFS has also told Dominion it will not be allowed to leave more than 500 feet of trench open at a time while it lays the pipe on forest service land. As USFS told FERC, that limit was set for an environmentally protective reason, and it sees no reason to grant an exception for this project.

We ask: why does FERC facilitate exceptions to this limit elsewhere, on privately owned land, since much of the private property the pipeline would cross is exactly the same kind of land that exists on the national forests?

Dominion has yet to satisfy anyone who knows this area that it can build the pipeline here without damaging our fragile ecosystem, and it cannot adequately mitigate the damage, either. Once the flows are changed, or the water quality is negatively impacted, the damage is done.

And now comes the question of compressor stations. There's no evidence the ACP can be constructed without adding more compressor stations than are currently in their FERC permit application. Few trust Dominion enough to feel assured the ACP can be built up and over these mountains without more stations to maintain pressure in the line. It would not be the first time that compressor stations have been added to a pipeline project after it has been permitted.

Dominion has applied to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation with a plan to mitigate nearly a dozen properties with VOF easements by offering up a couple of other properties instead, ones it would place the same kind of easements upon. But VOF is far from making a decision about that, and won't even discuss the proposal until February. How, then, can FERC issue a draft EIS before that issue is resolved?

These are just a few among dozens of issues Dominion has not addressed adequately for FERC, or anyone else. It's been more than two years since Dominion announced its plans, and in all that

time, the company hasn't explained its plans in enough detail for anyone, or any agency, to examine every potential impact and mitigation measure. The purpose of an Environmental Impact Statement, under the National Environmental Policy Act, is to spell out all the potential impacts to our environment and our welfare — with input from citizens, not just regulatory agencies. We have urged FERC to delay the draft Environmental Impact Statement until every last detail is addressed for every citizen, organization, and state and federal agency. This request has fallen on deaf ears.

Dominion is proposing to cross the Appalachian Trail and the BlueRidge Parkway in Nelson County by boring 800 feet down and 4200 feet across. Boring in this terrain is unprecedented and untested. The boring would commence on Hazel Palmer's property, which her family has held for hundreds of years. It would necessitate a mile long flat corridor across scenic hills and hollows in full view of the AT and the Parkway. On the east side the bore landing would be at the entry to Wintergreen resort, potentially blocking the only access to a resort that economically has been the backbone of the community with over a million of visitors every year. And if Dominion's engineers deem the bore "unfeasible", it would resort to conventional trenching and blasting a 125' corridor across the top of Love Gap, across the AT and the Blue Ridge Parkway. FERC requires no environmental analysis of this option.

Knowing that FERC will fail to assess the potential impacts to Nelson County, residents have taken it upon themselves to alert the public and to document potential damage to our county. We have undertaken a Steep Slope Study of key places on the proposed route with extremely steep slopes with a history of slides and hillsides that "melted away" during Hurricane Camille in 1969. We are monitoring water quality at

numerous water crossings both up and down stream to provide baseline data FERC doesn't bother to require. We are in court fighting illegal surveys of properties undertaken by Dominion. We are strengthening our county floodplain ordinances to further protect water quality. And an economic study we commissioned projects \$25m loss in property values, \$150,000 loss in property tax revenue, \$18m annual loss in recreation tourism expenditures, over \$4.5m lost yearly in ecosystem services and over \$1m loss in personal yearly income should the pipeline be built as proposed.

FERC's response: "Take that, Nelson County!" Well Nelson County won't take it. We will stop this madness in Nelson County and across the entire commonwealth. State by state and pipeline by pipeline, we will reclaim our right to our property, our privacy, our safety, our security and our land.