



ABRA Update #231 – May 30, 2019

Five years and counting

“Holy cow” is how the chairman of the Highland County Board of Supervisors reacted to the news that Dominion Energy planned to build a natural gas pipeline through his county, according to a May 29, 2014 news story in The Recorder newspaper. A Dominion spokesperson quoted in the story said that the Southeast Reliability Project, as the company initially called what has become the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), was to cost \$4 billion and be in operation by the end of 2018.

Dominion’s initial talking points in 2014 about the project said:

- The project would be the “energy equivalent of broadband infrastructure,” providing a “key driver in a community’s ability to attract economic development;”
- It would promote price stability and enhance economic opportunity;
- “Substantial economic benefits including a substantial number of well-paying construction jobs and additional tax base in communities along the route” would be provided;
- Dominion looks forward to working with affected landowners and communities “to ensure that we can optimize the balance of environmental stewardship and economic opportunity that is created” by the project.

Five years later, we have learned that the company’s words do not measure up to its stated talking points. At all! “Fake News” would seem to be a more apt characterization.

The ACP is now stalled due to it losing many of its key permits. By Dominion’s own admission, the project is over 2 years behind schedule and its anticipated project costs are nearly double the original estimate.

The extraordinary effort by ABRA’s more than 50 member organizations, dozens of cooperating organizations and thousands of committed volunteers are a significant reason for where we find ourselves today. But the fight is not over against the ACP. Our persistence and perseverance must continue! Thanks to all of our coalition participants for your past and future efforts.

- Lew Freeman, Executive Director, Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance

<p><i>Volunteer for ABRA’s Pipeline CSI Program</i></p> <p><u>Volunteer</u></p>	<p><i>Submit a report to the Pipeline CSI</i></p> <p><u>Report</u></p>	<p><i>Stay informed, like us on Facebook.</i></p> 	<p><i>Support ABRA financially</i></p> <p><u>GiveNow</u></p>
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Oil Change International Report Further Debunks the Myth of Gas as a Bridge Fuel

A new report released by Oil Change International makes the case that gas is not a “bridge fuel” to a safe climate. Aside from the often-discussed issue of leaking methane throughout the gas supply chain, the report identifies five additional reasons why gas cannot be the “bridge to a clean energy future” as it is touted by proponents.

Briefly, these points are:

- Gas Breaks the Carbon Budget
- Coal-to-Gas Switching Doesn’t Cut It
- Low-Cost Renewables Can Displace Coal and Gas
- Gas Is Not Essential for Grid Reliability
- New Gas Infrastructure Locks In Emissions

The report shows that myth of gas as a “bridge” to a stable climate does not stand up to scrutiny. Link to the Oil Change International press release and report [here](#). Also, see the Vox story in the Big Picture section.

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Proposed pipeline project hits 5-year mark

- The Recorder – 5/23/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Proposed-pipeline-project-hits-5-year-mark-Recorder_20190523.pdf

Timeline of events since the announcement of the ACP project. See part 2 below.

Related:

- https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Proposed-pipeline-Series-of-events-continues-Recorder_20190530.pdf

Solicitor general, ACP seek more time to appeal pipeline case to Supreme Court

- WV Gazette-Mail – 5/27/19

https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/cops_and_courts/solicitor-general-ACP-Seek-more-time-to-appeal-pipeline-case/article_e8560493-bcc2-5e21-b566-cb6a77288261.html

Noel Francisco, the solicitor general, wrote to the U.S. Supreme Court asking to move the deadline to June 25 — one month after the initial deadline. Chief Justice John Roberts granted the request.

'That's part of our responsibility': Faith leaders lead march in protest of Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- WRIC news – 5/17/19

<https://www.wric.com/news/politics/capitol-connection/-that-s-part-of-our-responsibility-faith-leaders-lead-march-in-protest-of-atlantic-coast-pipeline/2009590018>

Protests aimed at the ACP Compressor Station in Union Hill draw hundreds to Richmond.

Q&A: Climate leader works to shape ‘environmental awakening’ in Virginia

- Energy News Network – 5/29/19

<https://energynews.us/2019/05/29/us/qa-climate-leader-works-to-shape-environmental-awakening-in-virginia/>

In her 18 months as the director of Virginia Interfaith Power & Light, Kendyl Crawford is advancing a piece of the climate change conversation that has lagged behind.

Dominion Responds to Calls for Deregulation

- Bacon's Rebellion – 5/20/19

<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/dominion-responds-to-calls-for-deregulation/>

Related:

- https://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/william-murray-column-electric-utility-deregulation-is-bad-for-consumers/article_b6548077-4960-5819-bbce-236d45d0f69c.html
- <https://rtoinsider.com/verc-end-dominion-monopoly-137350/>

Dominion Energy Is Putting the Brakes on Dividend Growth

- Yahoo Finance – 5/26/19

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/dominion-energy-putting-brakes-dividend-220200080.html>

“Dominion is basically slowing its dividend growth to around 2.5% to create some financial breathing room...” Perhaps because of multi-billion dollar cost over-runs on a certain flawed pipeline project?

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Mountain Valley Pipeline urges judge to remove tree-sitters

- The Roanoke Times – 5/29/19

https://www.roanoke.com/business/mountain-valley-pipeline-urges-judge-to-remove-tree-sitters/article_abccd071-8c1a-549a-b920-6a5cdbce5fe7.html

Mountain Valley said in mid-May it would like to have the tree-sitters removed by the end of the month “in order to avoid additional costs.”

Related:

- <https://www.wsls.com/news/virginia/new-river-valley/pipeline-opponents-continue-supporting-last-remaining-tree-sit-in-montgomery-county>

21 Virginia Legislators Send Letter to DEQ Director Paylor, Call for Immediate Order of Compliance with Erosion and Sediment Controls for Mountain Valley Pipeline

- Blue Virginia – 5/25/19

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/05/21-virginia-legislators-send-letter-to-deq-director-paylor-call-for-immediate-order-of-compliance-with-erosion-and-sediment-controls-for-mountain-valley-pipeline>

Hileman: MVP renders the law meaningless

- The Roanoke Times – 5/23/19

https://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/hileman-mvp-renders-the-law-meaningless/article_7a8b89e8-d10f-5a30-b2c7-2b1dd4584718.html

“To hell with your permits” perfectly encapsulates the ethos of MVP.

“Yesterday, the mountains in Southwest Virginia visited Richmond, and today, they came to Northern Virginia!”

- Blue Virginia – 5/19/19

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/05/yesterday-the-mountains-in-southwest-virginia-visited-richmond-and-today-they-came-to-northern-virginia>

At the “Virginians for Justice: Progress Not Pipelines!” rally in Leesburg, a huge crowd of activists from across the Commonwealth called on Attorney General Mark Herring to take stronger action to stop the disastrous Mountain Valley Pipeline from destroying Appalachia.

Will they be built? Virginia’s contentious pipeline projects face major legal hurdles

- Virginia Mercury – 5/19/19

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2019/05/29/will-they-be-built-virginias-contentious-pipeline-projects-face-major-legal-hurdles/>

Legal hurdles remain as both projects experience construction problems, ACP fumbles for around Congressional action to cross the AT and authorities ratchet up charges against MVP protesters.

How eminent domain is blighting farmers in path of gas pipeline

- The Guardian – 5/28/19

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/28/how-eminent-domain-is-blighting-farmers-in-path-of-gas-pipeline>

Compulsory purchase – or the threat of it – of property on the route of a pipeline for fracked natural gas has left a slew of grievances and lawsuits in West Virginia and Virginia

Big Picture:

More natural gas isn't a “middle ground” — it's a climate disaster

- Vox – 5/30/19

<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/5/30/18643819/climate-change-natural-gas-middle-ground>

All those arguments for natural gas that seemed so compelling during the Obama years have fallen apart. It's now clear that if the world is to meet the climate targets it promised in Paris, natural gas, like coal, must be deliberately and rapidly phased out. There's no time for a bridge. And clean alternatives are ready.

'Freedom gas'? That's what Trump's Energy Department is now calling natural gas

- MarketWatch – 5/29/19

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/freedom-gas-thats-what-trumps-energy-department-is-now-calling-natural-gas-2019-05-29>

Anybody remember “Freedom Fries”? Here we go again...

To Make Headway on Climate Change, Let's Change the Subject

- The New York Times – 5/30/19

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/opinion/climate-elections-democrats.html>

Democrats need to stop wasting time (and elections) trying to get Republicans to admit they have been wrong about climate science. The only thing that matters is to pass measures to speed the energy transition.

Justices Reject Pipeline Eminent Domain, Utility Cases

- E&E News – 5/28/19

https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Justices-reject-pipeline-eminent-domain-utility-cases-EE-News_20190528.pdf

The Supreme Court's refusal to review the case is a loss for property rights advocates concerned that pipeline development is encroaching on Fifth Amendment rights.

Related:

- <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/Export-pipelines-new-front-in-eminent-domain-13895705.php>

Pipeline opponents challenge Louisiana law targeting protesters

- Reuters – 5/22/19

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-louisiana-pipeline-lawsuit-idUSKCN1SS2Io>

The new law aims “to chill, and harshly punish, speech and expression in opposition to pipeline projects,” the plaintiffs said in the lawsuit.

Related:

- <https://grist.org/article/texans-could-get-a-year-in-prison-for-protesting-pipelines-on-their-own-land/>

Renewable Energy Costs Take Another Tumble, Making Fossil Fuels Look More Expensive Than Ever

- Forbes – 5/29/19

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dominicdudley/2019/05/29/renewable-energy-costs-tumble/#7ca1800ae8ce>

The cost of renewable energy has tumbled even further over the past year, to the point where almost every source of green energy can now compete on cost with oil, coal and gas-fired power plants, according to new data released today.