EQT/NEXTERA OPEN HOUSES AND FERC SCOPING MEETINGS

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You need to understand the differences between a Company Sponsored Open House and a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Sponsored Scoping Session.

Open Houses -- like the upcoming ones in Gretna on Monday, December 15th (at the Hampton Inn Gretna), Rocky Mount on Tuesday, December 16th (at the Harvester Performance Center), Salem on Wednesday, December 17th (at the Salem Civic Center), and Blacksburg on Thursday, December 18th (at the Days Inn Blacksburg Conference Center). All of these meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. -- are company-sponsored. They are promotional efforts by the pipeline companies to prove to you why the pipeline is a good thing – and they are used to help the pipeline companies learn landowners' concerns so they can use these to their advantage during the filing process. The Open Houses in Giles and in all of the affected West Virginia counties will be held in January.

According to FERC, "One common misunderstanding is the difference between Open Houses and Scoping Meetings. Open Houses are sponsored by the Company, and Scoping Meetings are sponsored by FERC (see discussion below for information on Scoping Meetings). As part of the Company's community outreach program in Commission's pre-filing process, the Company will [is required to] hold Open Houses in the vicinity of the proposed project area to share information about its project with the public."

According to Williams, "One of the first opportunities that interested parties have to learn more about the project is during our open house meetings. It is also a chance for the Williams team [employees and paid consultants] to gather additional information on potential issues that may exist within the study corridor."

From No Fracking in MASS: "It's important to remember that the pre-filing period lasts until the formal filing is submitted [anticipated to happen with the MVP in Fall of 2015]. The main purpose of the open houses is for [the company] to share information and present their case for the pipeline. The pre-filing is a time for the pipeline company to gather information to be able to submit a more complete formal application to FERC. The open houses are a time to for us listen to what they have to say with a critical ear, and to help us prepare, but not disclose vital information about the direct impacts this project could have to our personal properties and our towns." **[NOTE From Preserve the NRV: If people attending the open houses divulge too much information, it can actually be used to help EQT/NextEra build their case for the pipeline project or help them create their defense for our arguments against the pipeline.]**

If you would like see what occurs at a typical Open House, you can view a video that was taken at an open house sponsored by Williams for the Atlantic Sunrise project in Pennsylvania this past June at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNDZI-fsC2Q.

For Landowners: If you are a landowner who has been contacted by Mountain Valley Pipeline as a potential location for the pipeline, be sure you bring the Parcel ID # for the property with you to the Open House. The company representatives attending these meetings have the ability to enter your Parcel ID# and their map will zoom to your location allowing you to see where exactly the proposed pipeline is slated to go on your property.

Now, what about Scoping Meetings?

From FERC: “Scoping meetings, which are sponsored by FERC, are utilized by staff to identify relevant issues of major Certificate projects, pursuant to NEPA. Scoping is the process of defining and refining the scope of an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA) and the alternatives to be investigated. The scoping process is one of the opportunities for public involvement. Affected property owners and other stakeholders can provide detailed comments about issues pertaining to their properties. For example, stakeholders can provide information on sensitive environmental features in the project area; suggest alternatives to be evaluated; or help identify construction constraints.”

“FERC staff may hold public scoping meetings in the project area for major projects that typically require an EIS or EA. The scoping meetings are typically held during the Commission's pre-filing process, but may be held after the application is officially filed with the Commission.”

But you should know that EQT/NextEra and possibly hired consultants will be listening. “FERC scoping meetings are open to the general public and are structured for people to make statements to the FERC staff about the project. FERC staff describes the environmental review process with members of the public, provides relevant information, and answers procedural questions. **The Company is present and typically gives a summary of its project and is available before and after the formal part of the meeting for questions and answers”** (emphasis added).

“One of the main purposes of a formal scoping meeting is so the members of the public get an opportunity to speak their concerns. Comments on the proposed project may be submitted in written form or made verbally during the course of the scoping meeting. The scoping meetings are recorded by a stenographer and will become part of the formal record of the Commission proceeding on the project. Scoping meeting transcripts are accessible and placed in the record through the Commission's eLibrary system, in the docket number assigned to the proceeding.”

Again, you should know that whatever is stated to FERC or sent to FERC can and probably will be used by EQT/NextEra to strengthen their formal proposal next fall. “**Information gathered at scoping meetings during pre-filing help the Company prepare environmental mitigation measures to present in its environmental resource reports filed with the Commission in its Certificate Application”** (emphasis added). “In return, this information provides FERC staff with the resources needed to publish a more complete environmental document for public review. Companies not involved in the pre-filing process are not afforded the benefit of resolving stakeholder concerns prior to filing their Certificate Applications.”

So there are several upcoming open houses with EQT/NextEra regarding their proposed MVP project. What should you do?

Well, the first answer is simple, you should do whatever you think best for you, your family, your land, and your lives.

We at Preserve the NRV do have some suggestions beyond that.

You may be passionate about what you see as the harmful effects of the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed MVP, but to get this this ill-conceived projected stopped we must continue to compile scientific evidence, reports, surveys, historic documents, or other compelling evidence on the following issues. These should be sent directly to FERC and/or presented to them at their spring Scoping meetings – BUT any evidence you have should <u>not</u> be shared with EQT/NextEra or with any of their paid consultants. Their open houses are used to convince you, persuade you, cajole you or otherwise coax you to not

oppose the MVP. They will listen to you and then go about finding ways and evidence to counter or discredit any arguments you may have about the proposed MVP. So, go listen, watch, and learn their tactics and strategies. And then continue compiling evidence on issues we face with the MVP. That evidence should be shared with FERC, environmental groups, conservation, groups, and local, state, and federal elected officials – but not with EQT/NextEra. The issues include, but are not limited to the following list.

Some general issues:

- No economic value to citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Virginians already have access to natural gas
- Engineering dangers of co-locating high power electric transmissions lines with large high pressure natural gas lines.
- Potential impacts of the project on directly affected landowners, their land use, their land values, their mortgages, and their insurance.
- Safety and security associated with the construction and operation of the project, including emergency response planning and third-party damage prevention.
- Contingency planning for spills, accidents, or malfunctions during construction and operations of the Project.
- Protection of human rights and community health, safety and security (including risks, impacts)
- Use and management of dangerous substances including but not limited to construction equipment fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluids; explosives needed to fracture stone before digging pipeline trenches; herbicides used on the ROW.
- Land acquisition and involuntary taking of land through imminent domain.

Environmental effects due to a pipeline construction and operation are a constant worry of many of us. Environmental effects are defined for the purposes of a federal environmental assessment and may include any change that the project may cause in the environment, such as:

- Environmental and Socio-Economic: The potential environmental and socio-economic effects of the MVP, including the environmental effects of accidents or malfunctions that may occur in connection with the project, and any cumulative effects that are likely to result from the Project
- Protection and Conservation: The protection and conservation of biodiversity, including endangered species and sensitive ecosystems in modified, natural and critical habitats, and identification of legally protected areas
- Community: Impacts on affected communities, and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups
- Cumulative impacts: cumulative effects to our land, water, air, and lives due to existing pipeline projects, the proposed MVP project, and anticipated future projects
- Heritage: The harmful effects to our heritage and the use of lands for traditional purposes
- Significant Cave Conservation Sites: A Significant Cave is one which meets three of nine significant criteria, such as it contains a rare and endangered species. There are at least five Significant Cave Conservation Sites the MVP will intersect and seven more are just north of the proposed route. 200 additional caves are also within the MVP study area.
- Atmospheric environment: Air quality can be affected by dust during construction and by air contaminants emitted by the combustion of fossil fuels used for construction

equipment and compressor stations (if driven by natural gas as stated by MVP). Air quality also includes emissions of greenhouse gases directly related to the project due to pipeline methane leaks, unburned natural gas used to power compressor stations, and blowdowns of pressure at compressor stations.

- Acoustic environment: Noise is increased relative to background noise by construction activities and the operation of compressor stations.
- Soils: Soils can be eroded, compacted and mixed, contaminated, and removed, and they can be acidified by local emissions of chemicals causing acid rain.
- Geology and terrain: Possible alterations of geology can cause landslides, along with accompanying risks to safety and environment, such as to fish habitat.
- Karst and sinkholes: Underground aquifers can be contaminated, thus harming endangered species and possibly contaminating drinking water of individuals on wells.
- Vegetation: Vegetation (including old growth forests and rare communities of plants) can be affected by surface disturbance, changes in water flows, the arrival of alien species and air contamination.
- Wildlife: Risks to wildlife can be caused by the removal, alteration and fragmentation of habitat, as well as by noise, changing access and sightlines for predators, and the creation of barriers to movement.
- Surface water resources: Water quality and quantity could be affected by erosion and crossing excavations as well as by herbicides applied to maintain a clearing around the pipeline.
- Freshwater fish and fish habitat: Activities related to the pipeline such as the clearing of vegetation, and the grading and placement of structures in water, have the potential to affect the productive capacity of fish habitat, migration, and fish health and mortality.
- Hydrogeology: Blasting, grading and tunnel construction could alter both surface and groundwater flow and expose rock formations, which could potentially leach acid or metals.
- Paleontology: Fossil resources, which are important for the scientific understanding of evolution and climate change, can be affected by direct construction activities as well as by fossil collectors who have increasingly greater access to these resources.
- And the list of issues goes on as those of you conducting research are well aware.