

## Letter to our Virginia Representative, with an Environmental Focus

Dear [Virginia Representative],

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed EQT /NextEra Mountain Valley Pipeline Project and to urge you to oppose this project and to support clean energy in Virginia.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline Project is a proposed natural gas pipeline that would carry hydraulically fracked natural gas from the Marcellus shale region, specifically from Wetzel County, West Virginia, to its expected primary delivery point, Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Company's (Transco) Zone 5 compressor station 165 in Pittsylvania County. In addition to the primary delivery point, the EQT would offer other natural gas shippers the option to request a project extension to delivery points further south into North Carolina. The route would cross both private and public lands. It will disrupt transportation including having to cross I-81, Norfolk Southern rails, and many other surface and neighborhood roads and streets. It will pass through the Appalachian Mountains, across the Appalachian Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and countless streams and tributaries.

The proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline will be 42" in diameter – a size never constructed in mountainous terrain as we have in the New River Valley. The proposed pipeline will be 12" inches larger in diameter than the 30" pipelines causing catastrophic damage in Appomattox in 2008 and San Bruno, CA in 2010. It will carry almost 2 times the volume of explosive methane gas as each of those pipelines. It will have a capacity of 2 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day which means that it will be capable of pushing 23,148 cubic feet of natural gas per second under or near homes, schools, and hospitals. Since each cubic foot of natural gas represents more than 1,000 BTUs, then that means 23.148 Million BTUs per second will be flowing under or near our homes. This will be a high pressure 1,440 PSI pipeline. If the pipe should burst an unprecedented volume of gas will leave the breach in the pipeline at an extraordinary pressure. Catastrophic damage will be an understatement. The New River Valley does not have the emergency services or forestry services to contain a catastrophic event in mountainous regions with prevailing strong winds along ridges.

In the mountains and in riverbeds, placement of the 42-inch transmission pipeline would require blasting through rock. Sediment erosion from construction would threaten water quality, and leakage from the pipeline would remain a permanent threat to both water and air quality for the duration of the pipeline's use. Forest habitat would be fragmented by the pipeline easement, leading to decreased biodiversity and an increase in invasive species.

The pipeline would also require the construction of noisy and unsightly compressor stations, which would run continuously for 24 hours a day, along its route. Through its construction and maintenance, EQT's Mountain Valley pipeline would destroy and disrupt the environment and would irrevocably alter the rural and scenic character of the New River Valley and the other rural Virginia counties through which it would run.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline is proposed to go through heavily karst topography. It will be like putting the pipeline on Swiss cheese. Our landscape is filled with sinkholes, sinking streams, caves, and springs. Natural gas liquids contain benzene and other heavy hydrocarbons which do not readily vaporize or disappear, and can be damaging to the karst aquifer. Many of us get our water from wells which derive their water from karst aquifers. Montgomery County has 82 known caves, Giles County has 301, and Roanoke County has 81.

Once completed, the pipeline easement would be maintained by chemical herbicides and are often maintained by aerial spraying which can cause many health problems in children and adults including Parkinson's disease later in life. The spraying of herbicides can also be harmful to livestock and crops.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline would create increased pressure for fracking in the George Washington National Forest. Fracking results in contamination of drinking water, earthquakes, and the release of unmonitored quantities of methane gas, an even more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. Fracking in the George Washington National Forest would threaten the drinking water reserves of millions of residents of Virginia. Furthermore, increasing the supply of natural gas through fracking and new pipelines increases dependence on fossil fuels, does not present a solution to the problem of climate change, and creates obstacles to investments in clean energy technologies, like solar and wind.

If constructed, the Mountain Valley Pipeline would have a lasting negative impact on the New River Valley counties of Giles and Montgomery as well as the other counties in its path, Roanoke, Franklin, and Pittsylvania Counties. Construction of the pipeline involves cutting a 125 to 200 clear-cut right-of-way through forestland, farms, and the backyards of citizens of Virginia. Our beautiful New River Valley, the Appalachian Trail, and the Blue Ridge Parkway and the lives of those of us who live here will be forever scared.

As your constituent, I urge you to oppose the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project and to support clean energy in Virginia.

Sincerely,