



ABRA Update #129 – May 12, 2017

Sierra Club Petitions Virginia SCC Over ACP

The Sierra Club has petitioned the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) asking that the agency examine the appropriateness of the internal agreement by Dominion Virginia Power to purchase gas from the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP).

The [May 8 petition](#) is based on requirements of the Virginia's Affiliates Act, which was established to ensure that all business deals between utilities and their corporate affiliates are in the public's interest. Should a utility seek to conduct business with any subsidiary or corporate affiliate, it must first file an application with the SCC. The Commission must then review the transaction to ensure that it will benefit Virginians. Commission proceedings under the Affiliates Act are open to participation by affected parties. In the case of the ACP deal, every organization involved is fully or partially owned by Dominion Resources or one of its subsidiaries. Therefore, the Affiliates Act requires the Commission to review and approve the arrangement before it can take effect.

Kate Addelson, Director of Sierra's Virginia chapter, said: "This agreement should not move forward until Virginians are given the opportunity to have their voices heard. Energy deals like this can only be approved if they will benefit Virginians, but the only thing Dominion has proved thus far is that it's trying to shut the public and its own ratepayers out."

Trump Nominates New FERC Commissioners

President Trump formally nominated on May 10 two new members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). They are:

- [Neil Chatterjee](#) (for a term expiring June 30, 2021) is energy policy advisor to United States Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. In that capacity, he serves as the Leader's liaison to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Committee on Environment and Public Works and the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition. Prior to serving Leader McConnell he worked as a Principal in Government Relations for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and as an aide to House Republican Conference Chairwoman Deborah Pryce of Ohio. He began his career in Washington with the House Committee on Ways and Means. He is a graduate of St. Lawrence University and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. More on Chatterjee [here](#).

Please support ABRA's important work by clicking [here](#).

- Robert F. Powelson (for a term expiring June 30, 2020) has been a member of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) since 2008. He was elected President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners on November 15, 2016. In 2011, Pennsylvania Governor Corbett (R) appointed Powelson as a member of the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission. Previously, he served as the President of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry. From 1990-91, Powelson served as a Staff Assistant to Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA). More on Powelson [here](#).

Continuing on the Commission will be Cheryl LaFleur, who is currently serving as Acting Chairman. The second sitting Commissioner, Collette Honorable, whose term expires on June 30, did not seek reappointment. She has indicated she is willing to stay on until her successor is seated. The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will be conduct confirmation hearings whenever they occur. With the departure of Commissioner Honorable, both Mr. Chatterjee and Mr. Powelson will need to be confirmed before FERC will once again have a quorum to enable it to approve pending projects. Given the Senate schedule over the next several months and other uncertainties, it is not clear when confirmation consideration for the two nominees will begin.



Chattererjee



Powelson

In the News:

Local/Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Sierra Club Files Petition with SCC Seeking Affiliates Act Review Before Dominion Commits to Atlantic Coast Pipeline Deal

- Blue Virginia – 5/9/17

<http://bluevirginia.us/2017/05/sierra-club-files-petition-scc-seeking-affiliates-act-review-dominion-commits-atlantic-coast-pipeline-deal>

“The fact that DVP is now trying to enter into a whole new contract to ship gas to the same power plants via a much costlier pipeline ought to raise a lot of eyebrows.”

Dominion responds on Valley Center karst

- The Recorder – 5/11/17

http://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Dominion_responds_on_Valley_Center_karst-Recorder_20170511.pdf

Dominion has identified a route variation to avoid karst features east of Valley Center Road for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Hikers visit old forest in the Dominion pipeline path

- The Recorder – 5/11/17
http://www.abralliance.org/wp_content/uploads/2017/05/Hikers_visit_old_forest_in_the_Dominion_pipeline_path-Recorder_20170511.pdf

Former Obama EPA Official Now Lobbying for Atlantic Coast Pipeline

- LittleSis – 5/8/17
<https://news.littlesis.org/2017/05/08/former-obama-epa-official-now-lobbying-for-atlantic-coast-pipeline/>
The revelation that Vaught, a former Obama EPA employee and congressional chief of staff, is lobbying for Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline is a stark example of the revolving door between environmental regulators and the fossil fuel companies that they oversee.

Pipeline planners share safety protocol with local officials

- The Wilson Times – 5/10/17
<http://wilsontimes.com/stories/pipeline-planners-share-safety-protocol-with-local-officials.84950>
Representatives from the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project team made a presentation Wednesday to local emergency planning officials regarding safety operations, construction, coordination and security of the proposed pipeline.

Regional/Mountain Valley Pipeline, other

Pipeline route lands Newport on list of state's 'most endangered' historic places

- The Roanoke Times – 5/9/17
http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/giles_county/pipeline-route-lands-newport-on-list-of-state-s-most/article_98d99fc9-1956-5ddc-aba2-691b7a5afe44.html

Cutler: Pipeline threatens lake water

- The Roanoke Times – 5/10/17
http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/cutler-pipeline-threatens-lake-water/article_71d26a8b-707e-513c-af2f-515739dceeaf.html
The Forest Service commented that MVP has “wildly overestimated” its ability to control erosion.

State police ask pipeline surveyors to leave Bent Mountain property

- The Roanoke Times – 5/11/17
http://www.roanoke.com/business/news/roanoke_county/state-police-ask-pipeline-surveyors-to-leave-bent-mountain-property/article_61c6360c-faae-5254-bd99-853f8a20af28.html
Questions regarding legality of surveyor entry remain unresolved, according to police, landowners.

Dominion shareholders approve name change but face pressure on environmental issues

- Richmond Times-Dispatch – 5/10/17
http://www.richmond.com/business/dominion-shareholders-approve-name-change-but-face-pressure-on-environmental/article_ac59d1b3-d503-510a-a991-365cda0d4cd1.html
Shareholders approved a company name change Wednesday but rejected proposals related to lobbying disclosures, nominating a board member with environmental expertise, preparing a report on methane emissions and publishing a risk assessment of the company's investment in fossil-fuel power generation.
Related:
- <http://baconsrebellion.com/farrell-defends-dominions-environmental-record/>

Big Picture:

In Win for Environmentalists, Senate Keeps an Obama-Era Climate Change Rule

- The New York Times – 5/10/17
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/10/us/politics/regulations-methane-climate-change.html>
The failure of the effort to roll back the methane rule is a small but significant victory for environmentalists in the Trump era, as the president has pushed aggressively to dismantle most of his predecessor's environmental legacy.

U.S. blocks major pipeline after 18 leaks and a 2 million gallon spill of drilling mud

- The Washington Post – 5/11/17

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/05/10/pipeline-shut-down-after-18-leaks-and-a-2-million-gallon-spill-of-drilling-materials>

The Ohio EPA director said the company's response had been "dismissive," "exceptionally disappointing" and unlike any other response he has seen from a company in his 27 years at the agency.

Related:

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/05/08/pipeline-spill-by-dakota-access-company-could-have-a-deadly-effect>

Trump FERC Nominees Bring Certainty for Pipeline Development, Less Certainty for Distributed Energy

- Greentech Media – 5/9/17

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/trumps-ferc-nominees-a-republican-energy-strategist-and-a-pro-natural-gas-s>

The Natural Resources Defense Council called on the nominees to continue FERC's "strong bipartisan tradition of removing electricity market and planning barriers to new energy resources.

Related:

<https://www.nrdc.org/experts/john-moore/trump-picks-two-ferc-will-bipartisanship-continue>

Arctic Nations to Meet Amid Unsettled U.S. Stance on Climate Change

- The New York Times – 5/9/17

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/climate/arctic-nations-to-meet-amid-unsettled-us-stance-on-climate-change.html>

The meeting comes at a time of rapid and extensive environmental change in the region, which scientists say is largely linked to climate change. The changes in the Arctic have the potential to lead to more economic development amid the region's fragile ecosystems, and to new security concerns.

In Search Of Gas: Cove Point And The Atlantic Seaboard

- BTU Analytics – 5/9/17

<https://btuanalytics.com/search-gas-cove-point-atlantic-seaboard/>

Cove Point LNG export facility is nearly on-line. Atlantic Sunrise...a planned supplier, is delayed. Cove Point until recently FED the TransCo system but soon will be a 700 mcf/d source of demand. Where will the gas come from? To attract more gas to the region, prices must rise.

Natural Gas Infrastructure Opponents Appeal Loss in Their Campaign to Invalidate Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Processes

- JD Supra – 5/11/17

<http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/natural-gas-infrastructure-opponents-63484/>

Industry-friendly analysis of Delaware Riverkeeper suits shows continued attacks on FERC process have industry's attention.

Right-Wing Media Promote Industry Group's Effort To Label Anti-Fracking Websites As "Fake News"

- Media Matters – 5/10/17

<https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2017/05/10/right-wing-media-promote-industry-group-s-effort-label-anti-fracking-websites-fake-news/216379>

Conservative outlets are highlighting a pro-fracking group's attempt to convince Google, which recently promised to alter its search algorithm to demote fake news, to also tweak it to purge or demote websites critical of fracking.

New York Threatens to Spoil Trump's Push for Fossil Fuels

- Bloomberg – 5/11/17

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-05-11/new-york-is-threatening-to-spoil-trump-s-push-for-fossil-fuels>

Midstream companies are "in talks with the White House on how the administration can help."