

## League Calls for Local Control in Communities across the Southeast:

### *Safeguard America's Resources Media Reports*

On February 12, 2015, direct action was taken by community-based Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters across three states in the Southeast to send one unified demand: Local control over polluting energy infrastructure. From southwest Virginia, to central North Carolina, to Southern Georgia, groups raised their voices in rallies, prayer vigils, and press conferences to be heard by local lawmakers and leaders, and across the South. Infrastructure from the extraction, transportation, combustion, and waste produced from fossil fuels is threatening each of these communities, respectively, in the form of pipelines, compressor stations, fracking, and toxic waste disposal. Media coverage, stories, photos and videos from the day's events can be viewed at the links below.

In **Floyd, VA**, environmental activists from Preserve Floyd, Preserve Roanoke, Preserve Franklin, Preserve Bent Mountain and Preserve Monroe convened a rally and press conference to oppose eminent domain for the Mountain Valley Pipeline and to demand the right for community-veto power and calling to "Preserve Democracy."

- Roanoke Times: [Mountain Valley Pipeline opponents push to have a local say at Floyd protest](#)
- WDBJ 7 (CBS): [Pipeline opponents rally for more local control](#)
- Blue Ridge Muse (video): [Pipeline protests still rage](#)



In **Roxboro, NC**, the BREDL chapter Person County People Rising in the Defense of Ecology (PC PRIDE) held a press conference to launch the local campaign to call a community-level veto over the dumping of coal ash and hydrfracking waste in the Republic Landfill located in Rougemont. The chapter will continue educational efforts and work with the NC Association of County Commissioners to secure local control over toxic waste in rural communities.

- Times-Courier News: [PC PRIDE kicks off awareness campaign as part of 3-state initiative](#)

In **Sanford, NC**, residents and concerned citizens held a press conference and prayer vigil at the Mount Calvary Baptist church, near the proposed Duke Energy dump site for an estimated 8 million tons of coal ash. Members of the Colon community and the grassroots group EnvironmentalLee are calling on elected leaders to respect their right to self-determination, and to oppose the coal ash site as well fracking in the Triassic Shale Basin, calling Lee County the geographical "heart" of North Carolina.

- Sanford Herald: [Rally kicks off campaign against 'dirty industry'](#)



In **Anson County, NC**, a press conference was held by local chapter Pee Dee W.A.L.L (Protecting our Water, Air, Land, and Lives) in front of the county court house in Wadesboro. Anson County is home to a privately run landfill that Duke Energy has selected as an alternate site for coal ash disposal, as well as potential fracking waste, and shale that could soon be targeted for hydraulic fracturing permits.



- Anson Record: [Pee Dee WALL challenges Ansonians to 'veto' governor, state legislature](#)
- Anson Express: [Protest of Fracking and Local Coal Ash Dumping is Set for Thursday](#)

In **Richmond County, NC**, A press conference was held on the court house steps in Rockingham by the Concerned Citizens of Richmond County, a grassroots group and chapter of BREDL that is dedicated to protecting air quality in the area most impacted by Duke Energy's Smith Energy Complex in the nearby community of Hamlet. Member displayed images of heavy smoke in their neighborhood, and carried a coffin to represent the "Death of Democracy."



- The Daily Journal: [Protesters allege air pollution](#)

In **Valdosta, GA**, students and activists from Lowndes County gathered on the campus of Valdosta State University to demand divestment from fossil fuels by the Georgia University System, and to oppose the Sabal Trail Pipeline, which threatens to cut through the nearby community, bringing natural gas to export terminals on the Atlantic coast of Florida.

- WALB 10 (NBC/ ABC): [Lowndes environmental groups march through VSU](#)
- WCTV: [VSU Students Protest Against Controversial Pipeline](#)



Sending a unified call to protect each community's right to self-determination and democracy was the overall theme of the day's events, chosen to take place on Abraham Lincoln's birthday. This message comes at a critical time in the South, when national energy policies and state regulations are being shaped by corporations, and communities are threatened with increased pollution and a loss of their rights to clean air, clean water, and local control. This article by Sue Sturgis with the *Institute for Southern Studies* brings attention to the national movement for divestment in fossil fuels and the conflict between lawmakers, energy companies, and communities in the South: [Protests around the South target fossil fuels in run-up to Global Divestment Day](#).