

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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**NEWS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LEAGUE DEMANDS THAT THE FERC EXTEND COMMENT PERIOD, HOLD ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) made a specific demand to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in its comments on Wednesday, June 16, the stated deadline for the FERC public comment period. The organization made it clear in their comments that the FERC needs to offer additional public hearings and a 90-day extension of the scoping comment deadline regarding the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP).

Anne Armistead, a member of the grassroots group “Preserve Floyd,” which is a chapter of BREDL, was glad to see that BREDL’s comments emphasized the reasoning behind the demand for more opportunities for public participation. She is one of many concerned citizens who were unable to get the e-comment feature to work on the FERC website the day of the deadline.

“The FERC has certainly not gone out of its way to ensure that the public’s voice is heard,” Armistead said, clearly angered. “I could not even get the e-comment feature to work on the day of the deadline when I tried to submit my comment. Because there were so few meetings in our region, I never got the chance to address the FERC directly. The traveling time was simply too much for me. I cannot even imagine what it would have felt like if I lived even further away or could not afford to travel, like some of the landowners in the path.”

Many are concerned that with only 6 public hearings along a route that includes 17 counties in VA and WV, it was simply not possible for everyone potentially affected by the MVP to be heard. In Elliston, the only public hearing held in the Roanoke/Montgomery County region, 113 people signed up to speak and only 70 were able to voice their concerns before the meeting was adjourned.

According to Mara Robbins, Virginia Coordinator with BREDL, she was one of the many citizens who were not heard during the FERC’s public hearing in Elliston, VA.

“When I signed up to speak in Elliston, I was given the number 81,” Robbins said. “It was heartbreaking to see all the people, many who’d traveled long distances, leave disappointed if not furious that they’d not been able to be heard.” Robbins works with community groups in the region who oppose the MVP. She continued: “Now, it appears that some citizens were not even able to even comment through the e-comment feature. The website itself is difficult to maneuver. Many people had a hard time figuring out how to use it. And it seems that it may have been so flooded with comments on June 16 that it did not even function properly.”

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, a regional organization with chapters and projects in seven states, was founded in 1984. It stands with communities that oppose the MVP.

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