

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

[www.BREDL.org](http://www.BREDL.org) PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629 [BREDL@skybest.com](mailto:BREDL@skybest.com) (336) 982-2691

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CONTACTS:**

Carolyn Reilly 540-334-1044  
Jenny Chapman: 540-929-4848  
Lou Zeller 336-977-0852 (cell)

## **Landowner's Rights Violated by Mountain Valley Pipeline Survey Crews**

Today at a press conference in Rocky Mount, residents announced that pipeline surveyors have been caught violating private property rights in Franklin County. Over the past few days various survey crews have been seen in various parts of Franklin County and have left survey tape on property they did not have permission to enter. Despite the posting of "No Trespassing" signs in clearly visible locations and letters forbidding them entry, they have conducted survey activities without landowners' consent.

Carolyn Reilly, whose land was wrongly surveyed, said, "This is a violation. We mailed a certified letter to the Mountain Valley Pipeline Project Manager denying permission to survey our family's land." Reilly said her property was surveyed earlier this week and there were many strips of blue survey tape tied to trees and shrubs near Teels Creek, which runs through her property. Reilly is a member of Preserve Franklin which opposes the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Jenny Chapman, a landowner in nearby Bent Mountain, declared: "Recent events in Franklin County as well as Poor Mountain in Roanoke County clearly illustrate a cavalier attitude by EQT regarding landowner's rights." Chapman, a member of Preserve Franklin and sister-group Preserve Roanoke, has voiced her opposition to the MVP project from the beginning. She continued, "In Franklin County, two acres of woodland caught fire after a surveyor carelessly disposed of a cigarette butt. If this carelessness happens at the survey level, how can we trust this company to manage a 42" high pressure pipeline moving billions of cubic feet of flammable gas across thousands of backyards along its route?"

Lou Zeller, executive director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said that this is not the first time he's witnessed such a violation of private property rights. He

said, "Pollution from the exploration and transport of natural gas poisons our communities. But here in Franklin County we see a parallel danger to our communities, to our society and to our democracy from an aggressive oil and gas industry heedless of the law."

Anne Way Bernard, who has lived in Franklin County for 40 years, summed up what many have observed, saying, "We are deeply saddened that our county leaders are not on our side in favor of fighting to stave off this potentially devastating situation. They don't seem to know the facts, and are allowing promises of gain to overpower their concerns for our future, and not a distant future, but a future where their very children will live. We can't allow this further decline of our environment to be our legacy."

According to a consultant hired to represent Mountain Valley Pipeline at the Roanoke County Pipeline Advisory Committee, there are about seven survey contractors. Coates Field Services is the survey contractor project manager. Holland Engineering is doing reference point surveying. Tetra-tech is the lead environmental survey contractor and they have hired several subcontractors, including ESI. Cultural resources surveying is to be done by ASC Group in West Virginia, and by New South Associates in Virginia. ERG is the contractor for wetlands and streams surveying. Draper Aden Associates, based in Blacksburg, Virginia, has been hired as a karst topography survey expert.

Following the press conference, Preserve Franklin held a town hall style meeting in Rocky Mount which featured Zeller speaking to residents about natural gas and its impacts on public health and private property. Preserve Franklin and Preserve Roanoke are chapters of the seven-state Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

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