

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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Report on Air and Noise Pollution Reveals Fatal Flaws in Permit Recommends Rejection of Proposed Buckingham Compressor Station

Dillwyn, VA – Today at a press conference the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League issued a report detailing the air and noise pollution which residents would be forced to endure if the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline compressor station is built in Buckingham County. The report concludes that the Buckingham County Planning Commission failed with respect to its legal obligation to ensure that the facility does not have a disproportionate impact on Buckingham's African American community.

The report, subtitled "Unfair, Illegal and Unjust," states, "The policy of the Commonwealth is to ensure that development of new, or expansion of existing, energy resources or facilities does not have a disproportionate adverse impact on economically disadvantaged or minority communities. The Virginia General Assembly enacted this law to protect family life and public health in residential areas. Buckingham County must go back and implement the law which protects its residents from obnoxious noise and toxic air pollution."

Lou Zeller, author of the report and the Executive Director of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, "Our analysis indicates that residents of the Union Hill community who live near this compressor station site would breathe air poisoned with toxic contamination, resulting in serious health risks." Zeller based this on information contained in Dominion's air permit application submitted to Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality.

The report also reveals errors which the Buckingham County Planning Commission made during its hearing process and recommendation to approve the Special Use Permit for the proposed compressor station. Sharon Ponton, a BREDL community organizer who has been

working with the Buckingham grassroots group, Concern for the New Generation, said, "The most glaring of those errors is that the pipeline company is requesting the Special Use Permit as a public utility company. But the ACP air permit application states that the Buckingham Compressor Station will not be subject to federal Clean Air Act acid rain regulations because it is a non-utility facility. The pipeline company's own words invalidate the permit."

The report also found large gaps in noise pollution control. Zeller pointed to conditions added to the special use permit by the Planning Commission, saying, "Condition number six limits noise levels from the compressor station 90% of the time." Zeller continued, "Natural gas pipeline compressors operate 24/7, meaning the compressor could cause unlimited levels of noise more than 36 days per year, that's five weeks, 24 hours per day."

Additional errors regarding the special use permit include the fact that the compressor would be outside the industrial zones outlined in the County's comprehensive plan. Ponton stated, "A 57,000 horsepower compressor station is certainly an industrial use and is only allowed in areas zoned for those activities. Yet the Planning Commission ignored the concerns of citizens and recommended approval of the proposed compressor station in an agricultural zone."

Kathie Mosely, co-chair of Concern for the New Generation, said, "We have attended and participated in each of the planning commission and Board of Supervisors meetings and brought many valid issues to the attention of officials in Buckingham," Mosely continued. "I'd like to ask the Board who they represent, us or Dominion? And I want to know why they think they have no alternative but to turn their backs on the people who live here?"

Concern for the New Generation is a chapter of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, an environmental and social justice organization formed in 1984.

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