

## Roanoke Friends Minute of Concern Regarding Natural Gas Pipelines

Bearing witness to our testimonies of stewardship of the earth and social justice, we, as Friends (Quakers), are compelled to speak out against two natural gas pipelines proposed in Virginia, and *all* pipelines transporting gas extracted by hydraulic fracking. Fracking is a process documented to contaminate air and water with toxic chemicals, accelerating climate change and encouraging our dependence on fossil fuels.

The 42" diameter Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) would transport natural gas at high pressure for hundreds of miles, traversing steep slopes, cutting through mountains, valleys and national forests. As proposed, the MVP and ACP would cross over streams and rivers in more than 1100 places, including several Tier 3 designated streams (waters of exceptional quality). Their destructive routes would impact one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world.

These pipelines bear tremendous risks to the inhabitants and environment of areas affected by them.

The mountains surrounding the Roanoke Valley form an important watershed supplying the entire region with high quality water. The very real likelihood of contamination and damage to these watersheds during Mountain Valley Pipeline's construction threatens the water supply of thousands of people in the valley and beyond. Water in other regions would also be impacted. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline would negatively affect the James and Potomac Rivers, which including their tributaries, serve over one-third of the state.

Pipelines are also a threat to social justice as they are frequently routed through rural and impoverished areas where people lack power to resist. In Buckingham County, Virginia, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline plans to place the largest compressor station in the state in a historic African-American community that was founded after the Civil War by freed men and women. The result would be devastation of this community as well as other communities and residents that find themselves in the crosshairs of these pipelines. **Eminent domain is being misused by a private corporation not for public good but for profit at the expense of private property rights.**

An ever-growing number of people have been resisting these pipelines for almost four years by reasoned, measured, and peaceable responses, using all legal avenues available. As the reality of pipeline construction increases, so has non-violent direct action, such as tree-sitting to block the Mountain Valley Pipeline's path. Local and state police as well as pipeline company security guards maintain constant presence at the tree stands. Supporters are not allowed access, food and supplies are withheld and spotlights shine on the tree stands all night.

We hold in the Light all those led by their conscience to resist these projects by corporations that place profit over human and environmental wellbeing and affirm the resisters' right to humane treatment and peaceful protest.

We ask that Friends insist that those in authority - Governor Northam, state legislators, The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, affected counties' supervisors, local and state police - use their power to protect the environment and uphold the rights of our fellow citizens.



