

Dear Governor Northam,

We are concerned citizens living throughout the Commonwealth whose private property is directly threatened by the proposed fracked-gas Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). We've fought to protect our homes, land, and water for the last 4 years. Despite all the work we've done — countless hours spent researching pipelines, driving to public hearings hours away from our communities, offering explicit testimonies — these pipelines are set to begin construction in the coming weeks. They are the largest pipelines ever proposed to cross our state and could devastate 6 of the 9 watersheds in the Commonwealth, yet there is clear economic evidence that these projects serve no defensible public need. Despite all the valid and evidence-based concerns and objections we've raised, our communities feel completely unheard and ignored by our leaders.

On February 14, 2017, you wrote a letter to the director of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), David Paylor, requesting that the agency hold the proposed pipeline projects "to the highest environmental standards." During your campaign, you professed over and over to only support these pipelines if they were built "with science, transparency, and respect for landowners." On January 13, during your inaugural address, you stated: "Tomorrow can be better for the men and women who depend on clean air and water for their livelihood and for the children who will inherit the environment we pass on to them."

Though we commend you for taking a position of advocacy during your campaign and your early days in office to fight for the integrity of our cherished forests and waterways, tomorrow is not a better day for us. As landowners in the path of these projects, we are the ones who are experiencing the impacts of these pipelines long before anyone else. We are the ones who feel the impacts the deepest. In fact, as you are reading this letter, some of us are already seeing activities that threaten our water quality. You still have the authority to hold true to your campaign promise. We need you to take a stand for us now.

In other states, pipeline construction has damaged forests and farms, and contaminated clean water sources. In the past 12 months, we have watched as state after state suspends the work of pipeline projects for egregious environmental and construction violations (some of which are being committed by the same contractors of the MVP), but the damage to the people and the land can never be undone. Compressor stations have harmed people's health, especially the most vulnerable — children and the elderly. Putting our communities at risk in this manner is contrary to your role as a political leader and as a physician.

We respectfully request that you take action to prevent similar harms in Virginia. We believe that impacts to water quality, including drinking water sources and the Chesapeake Bay watershed, will be significant and sustained. Therefore we entreat you to fulfill your pledge that the pipelines be "held to the highest environmental standards." Specifically, we are formally requesting that you:

- **Respect for Landowners**

- Visit the sites along both pipeline routes that are already bearing the negative impacts, particularly upland areas and on waterways. See firsthand the reasons why we, as landowners with intimate knowledge of the land and its best stewards, know that these projects are too risky and cannot be built without irreparable harm to our communities and environment.
- Direct DEQ to inform the applicants of the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines that tree-felling is not authorized unless the Clean Water Act Section 401 certification becomes effective, following final review and approval of the aforementioned plans.
- Direct DEQ to conduct a complete survey of all drinking water sources within at least 1,000 feet of the centerline of the proposed pipelines in karst areas as recommended by the Virginia Department of Health, and provide assurance that any drinking water source that is polluted, diminished, or completely cut off will be fully restored and the affected property owners fully compensated.

- **Transparency**

- Honor the State Water Control Board's clear intent and make all relevant information regarding erosion and sediment control, stormwater management, and karst mitigation plans available to the public, and subject these plans to meaningful public comment and hearings, including an official meeting of the State Water Control Board where the public has the opportunity to comment on the plans.

- **Science**

- Direct the DEQ to assess the potential water quality impacts for individual stream and wetland crossings for both pipelines, rather than rely on President Trump's Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide Permit process.

We ask that you consider this letter and follow-up with a response by Monday March 19, 2018. We look forward to hearing your plan for action and to working together to ensure that we protect the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents, environmental integrity and pursuit of justice.

Sincerely,