

SUMMARY COMMENTS ON COMPRESSOR STATIONS AND AIR QUALITY

Background

Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC (ACP), owned by Dominion Resources, Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas, plans to build a \$5+ billion, 556-mile pipeline from WV through VA to end in Robeson County, NC. The **North Carolina** segment is **over 180 miles**. There is a compressor station planned for VA, and one for VA. Because pipeline pressure decreases over distance, additional compressor station would boost pressure in the pipeline to move gas further. In early February, the Northampton County Commissioners granted a "Special Use Permit" for this facility, despite public opposition.

Concerns about Compressor Stations

Despite statements by ACP that this will be the only compressor station in NC, the U.S. Department of Energy (U.S. DOE) reports that a compressor station is needed every 50 to 100 miles along a pipeline , so it's likely ACP will add at least one and perhaps as many as three additional compressor stations to move the gas 180+ miles through NC.

Compressor stations generally run 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, and emit methane and volatile organic compounds through "fugitive emissions" (leaks), with greatly increased emissions during maintenance and "blowdowns" for emergency shutdowns. Compressor stations are inefficient, so much of the fuel burned does not produce power for the compressors, just polluting emissions and heat

As they emit high amounts of pollution, including sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, hazardous air pollutants including formaldehyde, greenhouse gases, and particulates, compressor stations are major sources of pollution. In cold weather, compressor stations emit many times higher levels of pollution. Any pollution controls do not function reliably, meaning that when the gas powered turbines are under a heavy load, larger quantities of pollutants will be emitted. State Air Quality regulations do little to protect local communities from such massive emissions.

Compressor stations are quite noisy, and since they run 24/7, they have created significant stress, sleep deprivation and endocrine disruption for persons and animals over a mile away. In both VA and NC, the single compressor stations are planned for lower income, mostly minority communities, a significant environmental injustice.

Other Air Quality Issues Inadequately Assessed in the DEIS

During pipeline construction, in addition to high noise levels and release of particulates, there will be emissions from fuel burning machinery, releases due to "blowdowns" and purges of the pipeline, as well as open pit burning. ACP claims these will not reach unsafe levels, due to idling limits, clean diesel technologies and "newer equipment."

During operations, blowdowns and purges will continue, releasing climate changing methane and toxic VOC's to the surrounding community. Pipeline leaks, despite improved detection methods available, continue to be a risk for fires and explosions.