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BEFORE THE

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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IN THE MATTER OF: : Project No.

MOUNTAINEER XPRESS PROJECT : PF15-31-000

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Ceder Lake Conference Center
82 FFA Drive
Ripley, West Virginia 25271

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

The above-entitled matter came on for scoping
meeting, pursuant to notice, at 6:00 p.m., Joanne Wachholder
, the moderator.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (6:06 p.m.)

3 MS. WACHHOLDER: All right. We're going to get
4 started now.

5 Good evening. On behalf of the Federal Energy
6 Regulatory Commission, or FERC or the Commission, I'd like
7 to welcome all of you tonight to an environmental scoping
8 meeting for the Mountaineer Xpress Project under development
9 by Columbia Gas Transmission LLC.

10 Let the record show that the public scoping
11 meeting in Ripley, West Virginia began at 6:06 p.m. on
12 December 9th, 2015.

13 My name is Joanne Wachholder and I am an
14 environmental project manager with the Commission's Office
15 of Energy Projects. With me is Robyn Susemihl, with Burns
16 and McDonnell Engineering. Burns and McDonnell is a
17 consulting firm working as a third-party contractor to
18 assist us in the preparation of the environmental impact
19 statement or EIS for the project.

20 FERC is also represented tonight by Julia Yuan,
21 another FERC environmental project manager and specifically
22 for this project.

23 Working at the sign-in table tonight is L. J.
24 Sauter and Travis Levitt, both from Burns and McDonnell.

25 You will also notice that we have a court

1 reporter, over here, transcribing this meeting. The purpose
2 for this is to ensure that we accurately capture your
3 comments and questions both for the public record and for
4 our use in preparing the EIS for the Mountaineer Xpress
5 Project.

6 The purpose of this meeting is to give you an
7 opportunity to learn about and provide specific
8 environmental comments on Columbia Gas' planned pipeline
9 project.

10 I'll quickly run through the agenda for tonight's
11 meeting. I'll start out by briefly describing the project
12 before us. I will also explain the role of the FERC and our
13 application process. Then we will hear from those of you
14 who signed up to speak at the table in the back and make
15 formal comments on the project. Is that better? Okay.

16 If we have time, oh, that's much better. If we
17 have time at the end of the meeting anyone who did not sign
18 up but would like to have their comments heard will have a
19 chance to speak.

20 The meeting will end once all speakers have
21 provided their comments or by 10 p.m., whichever comes
22 first.

23 Mountaineer Xpress would involve construction of
24 about 161 miles of new 36-inch diameter natural gas
25 pipeline, six miles of 24-inch diameter lateral pipeline and

1 three new compressor stations. It will also include
2 replacement of two short sections of 30-inch diameter
3 pipeline, installation of additional compression at three
4 other compressor stations, and construction of related
5 facilities.

6 All of the facilities will be constructed and
7 installed in 14 counties of western West Virginia.

8 The project would supply about 2.7 billion
9 standard cubic feet per day of natural gas transportation
10 capacity from production areas to downstream markets on the
11 Columbia Gas System.

12 After our meeting here is adjourned
13 representatives from Columbia Gas will remain available with
14 project maps to answer questions about the project.

15 Next I'm going to talk a bit about the scoping
16 process and public involvement in FERC projects in general.

17 First, the FERC is an independent, federal agency
18 that among other things regulates the interstate
19 transmission of natural gas. In this regard the FERC
20 reviews and evaluates proposals to construct and operate
21 interstate natural gas pipeline facilities, natural gas
22 storage facilities, and liquefied natural gas terminals.

23 As a federal licensing agency, the FERC is
24 required by the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA to
25 consider the potential environmental impacts associated with

1 new natural gas facilities such as Mountaineer Xpress during
2 its review and evaluation process.

3 Scoping, which we are engaged in tonight, is the
4 period during which we solicit input from the public before
5 beginning the environmental analysis. The idea is to get
6 information from the public as well as agencies and other
7 groups regarding what issues need to be addressed. This is
8 an important step because it allows you to indicate what
9 environmental resource issues are important.

10 Your comments tonight together with any written
11 comments you may have already submitted or intend to submit
12 will be added to the record and used to focus our
13 environmental analysis.

14 For the Mountaineer Xpress Project the FERC is
15 the lead federal agency for the NEPA review and the
16 preparation of the EIS.

17 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S.
18 Environmental Protection Agency, West Virginia Department of
19 Environmental Protection and West Virginia Division of
20 Natural Resources have agreed to participate as cooperating
21 agencies in the preparation of the EIS.

22 These agencies plan to use the EIS to meet their
23 respective NEPA responsibilities associated with issuing
24 their permits.

25 As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of this

1 meeting tonight is to give you an opportunity to comment on
2 the environmental issues that you would like to see covered
3 in the EIS.

4 It will help us the most if your comments are as
5 specific as possible regarding the potential environmental
6 impacts and reasonable alternatives for the planned
7 Mountaineer Xpress Project.

8 Scoping comments generally focus on the potential
9 for environmental effects, but may also address construction
10 issues, mitigation, and the environmental review process.

11 In addition this meeting is designed to provide
12 you with an opportunity to meet with Columbia Gas
13 representatives to ask them questions and to get more
14 detailed information about their proposed route, facility
15 locations, and construction plans.

16 Now I want to briefly describe our environmental
17 review process to you. To illustrate how this process
18 works, we've prepared a flow chart which is right here. It
19 was also appended to the notice of intent that you could
20 have gotten at the front table.

21 Currently we are near the beginning of our
22 environmental review process. We are presently in the first
23 of two periods labeled public input opportunities. Our
24 review of the planned project began on September 16th, 2015
25 when Columbia Gas' request to begin using the FERC's

1 prefiling process was approved.

2 The FERC's docket number for Mountaineer Xpress
3 is PF15-31-000. And that's on the top right-hand corner of
4 the notice. The docket number is unique to this project and
5 is associated with all project materials.

6 The PF part means that we are in the prefiling
7 stage of the process. The purpose of the prefiling process
8 is to encourage involvement by all interested stakeholders
9 in a manner that allows for the early identification and
10 resolution of environmental issues.

11 Once Columbia Gas files a formal application a
12 new docket number will be assigned that is preceded with a
13 C-P, which means that then it will be in the certificate
14 proceeding.

15 As of today no formal application has been filed
16 by Columbia Gas and we are in the early stages of the
17 project review period. However, the FERC along with other
18 federal, state, and local agency staffs has begun review of
19 the project.

20 For those of you who have access to FERC's
21 e-library website for project documents, you've seen that
22 Columbia Gas has begun filing draft resource reports. These
23 draft documents describe Columbia Gas' planned project and
24 as future documents are filed, they will describe the
25 environmental features crossed by the plan project, the

1 results of environmental surveys, and Columbia Gas' proposed
2 mitigation measures and plans.

3 On November 18th we issued the notice of intent
4 to prepare an EIS for the project which I hope most of you
5 received in the mail. In the NOI we described the
6 environmental review process, some already identified
7 environmental issues, and the steps the FERC and cooperating
8 agencies will take to prepare the EIS for the project.

9 The NOI also initiated the scoping period which
10 will end on December 17th. However, the end of the scoping
11 period is not the end of public involvement. We will accept
12 comments throughout our review of the project. However, for
13 us to adequately address your comments, analyze them, and
14 research the issues, we ask that you try to get those to us
15 as soon as possible. There will also be a comment period
16 once the draft EIS is published.

17 Once scoping is finished, our next step will be
18 to begin our independent analysis of Columbia Gas' proposal
19 and the project's potential impacts on the issues and
20 resources identified during scoping. This will include an
21 examination of the proposed facility locations as well as
22 alternative sites.

23 We will assess the project's impacts on water
24 bodies and wetlands, vegetation and wildlife, endangered
25 species, cultural resources, socioeconomics, geological

1 resources, soils, land use, air and noise quality, and
2 safety.

3 We will assemble information from a variety of
4 sources. These would include information received from
5 Columbia Gas, the public, other federal, state, and local
6 agencies and our own analysis and field work. When
7 complete, our analysis of the potential impacts will be
8 published as a draft EIS and presented to the public for a
9 45-day comment period.

10 This draft EIS will be mailed to all interested
11 parties. During the comment period we will hold more public
12 meetings to gather feedback on our analysis and findings.
13 After revising the draft EIS to respond to public comments
14 and any new information, a final EIS will be mailed to all
15 interested parties.

16 Please note that because of the size of our
17 mailing list, the EIS is often mailed as a compact disk or
18 CD. That means, unless you tell us otherwise, the EIS that
19 you will find in your mailbox will be on a CD. If you
20 prefer to have a paper copy mailed to you, you must indicate
21 that choice on the return mailer attached to the NOI. You
22 can also indicate that on the attendance sheet tonight at
23 the sign-in table.

24 As I mentioned earlier, our issuance of the NOI
25 opened a formal comment period that will close on December

1 17th. The NOI encourages you to submit your comments as
2 soon as possible to give us the time to analyze and research
3 the issues. If you received the NOI in the mail then you
4 are on our mailing list and will remain on our mailing list
5 to receive the EIS and any other supplemental notices we may
6 issue about this project unless you return the mailer
7 attached to the back of the NOI and indicate you wish to be
8 removed from the mailing list.

9 Again, there are extra copies at the sign-in
10 table. The mailing list for a project of this scope is
11 large and undergoing constant revision. You can be added to
12 our mailing list by signing up at the sign-in table or by
13 submitting comments on the project as long as your comments
14 include your mailing address.

15 I would like to add that the FERC encourages
16 electronic filing of all comments and other documents. That
17 information on that was in this smaller brochure, that
18 describes our e-filing system.

19 Instructions can also be found on our website at
20 www.FERC.gov under the e-filing link.

21 If you would like to submit written comments,
22 please follow the directions in the NOI. There's also a
23 link called e-subscription that is also available for you to
24 sign up using an e-mail address to receive e-mails each time
25 a document is filed in the docket.

1 It is very important that any comments you send,
2 either electronically or by traditional mail, include the
3 docket number for this project. If you decide to send us a
4 comment letter, please put that number at the top. That
5 will ensure that members of the staff evaluating the project
6 will get your comments as soon as possible. And, again,
7 that docket number for the Mountaineer Xpress Project is
8 PF15-31-000.

9 Now, I'm going to let Julia take it from here.

10 MS. YUAN: Thanks Joanne.

11 Now, I want to differentiate between the roles of
12 two parts of the FERC, the Commission and the environmental
13 staff. Joanne and I are part of the FERC environmental
14 staff and we will oversee the preparation of the EIS for
15 this project. We don't determine whether or not the project
16 gets approved. Rather the FERC Commission which consists of
17 up to five presidentially appointed commissioners is
18 responsible for making a determination on whether to issue a
19 certificate of public convenience and necessity to Columbia
20 Gas.

21 The EIS will describe the project facilities and
22 associated environmental impacts, alternatives to the
23 project, mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts, and the
24 environmental staff's conclusion and recommendation.

25 The EIS is not a decision document, but it will

1 disclose to the public and to the Commission the
2 environmental impact of constructing and operating the
3 Mountaineer Xpress Project.

4 The Commission will consider the environmental
5 information presented in the EIS as well as public comments
6 and environmental -- I'm sorry. As well as public comments
7 and a host of non-environmental issues such as engineering,
8 markets, and rates in making its decision to approve or deny
9 Columbia Gas' request for a certificate.

10 There is no review of FERC decisions by the
11 president or by Congress, which maintains the FERC's
12 independence as a regulatory agency and provides for fair
13 and unbiased decisions.

14 Only after taking the environmental and
15 non-environmental factors into consideration will the
16 Commission make its final decision on whether or not to
17 approve the project.

18 At this time are there any questions about the
19 scoping or the FERC's process?

20 (No response.)

21 MS. YUAN: We will now begin the important part
22 of the meeting where we will hear your comments.

23 We will first take comments from those who signed
24 up on the speakers' list which was back at the table where
25 you came in. If you would prefer, you may hand us written

1 comments tonight or send them to the Commission by following
2 the procedures outlined in the NOI.

3 There is also a form at the sign-in table that
4 you can use to write your comments and give them to us or --
5 give them to us tonight. There are also instructions on the
6 form detailing how to mail your comments in later.

7 Whether you provide your comments verbally, by
8 mail, or electronically, they will be considered by FERC
9 equally.

10 As I said before, this meeting is being recorded
11 by a court reporter so that all of your comments and
12 questions will be transcribed and put into the public
13 record.

14 To help the court reporter produce an accurate
15 record of this meeting, I ask that you please follow some
16 ground rules. When your name is called, please step up to
17 the microphone, state your name, and spell it for the
18 record. Identify any agency or group you are representing
19 and define any acronyms you may use. I also ask that
20 everybody else in the audience respect the speaker and
21 refrain from any audible show of agreement or disagreement.

22 Lastly, before we start, as a courtesy to our
23 speakers and the rest of the audience, please turn off or
24 silence your cell phones.

25 We are now ready to call our first speaker.

1 Robyn will take this.

2 MS. WACHHOLDER: First up is Mary Wildfire and on
3 deck is Vivian Stockman.

4 MS. WILDFIRE: My name is Mary Wildfire, spelled
5 just like it sounds. And what I have to say -- can you hear
6 me?

7 I can't tell if this is on.

8 MS. WACHHOLDER: Maybe you can move it up a
9 little bit.

10 MS. WILDFIRE: What I have to say is I think that
11 this generation, by which I mean my generation, our
12 children, the last of my parents' generation, today's adults
13 are unique in human history. I think that we will be the
14 first generation to be seen by our descendants with furious
15 loathing. Because we have been told by the scientists in
16 virtually unanimous agreement that climate change is a
17 problem that's going to do extreme damage to this earth,
18 leave our children with a nightmare world. And what we are
19 doing about it is pretending we don't believe it or
20 pretending that it's something somebody somewhere else is
21 going to do something about. And meanwhile we walk on doing
22 as we have done and bringing about that world they will have
23 to deal with.

24 This is supposed to be about one pipeline. Every
25 fossil fuel project is only about that project. But if we

1 go ahead and say yes to every single one of them and go
2 ahead doing this, then we are all working together to create
3 that world our children will hate us for creating.

4 If -- one of the things we're supposed to mention
5 here is alternatives. If this pipeline were designed to
6 bring energy to facilities that are building solar panels or
7 windmills, both of which are very energy intensive to build,
8 it would be justified because if we don't do that, if we
9 don't speed up the pace at which we build the renewable
10 infrastructure to replace today's fossil fuel
11 infrastructure, it looks to me very likely like our children
12 are going to be living in that nightmare world using horses
13 and candles for power because we will have used up the
14 easily accessible economically accessible fossil fuels as
15 well as creating such damage in the doing of it that burning
16 fossil fuels looks like something satanic to them.

17 And I guess all else I have to say is that
18 methane is known to be a much more powerful greenhouse gas
19 than carbon dioxide. The independent studies that were done
20 without the cooperation of industry show much higher levels
21 of methane leakage, high enough that gas is no better than
22 coal, at least on the studies. I guess EPA has proposed
23 tightening regulations on methane leakage. That would be
24 great if they do that. But meanwhile, this is a very
25 serious problem. It's not being addressed. We can't just

1 go on ahead pretending that this doesn't matter. And this
2 project, like all fossil fuel projects, along with the
3 global climate impacts also has myriad local environmental
4 damages, but local people have to suffer.

5 And in West Virginia, as you people probably
6 know, I don't know if you live here, but most people don't
7 have their own mineral rights. Therefore when the fracking
8 comes, I may be affected by this project not because the
9 pipeline is going to pass that close to me, but because it
10 will facilitate more drilling and fracking which could
11 happen on my land for all I know. And it isn't really fair
12 when some people pay the cost and other people reap the
13 benefits.

14 Cost benefit analyses need to take -- need to ask
15 that third question. Not only who benefits and let's see if
16 we can quantify it, what's the cost and let's see if we can
17 quantify it, but are these the same people? And one of the
18 biggest environmental injustices going on is the temporal
19 one where the people who have no voice at all, the people
20 who are children now, or haven't even been born, are going
21 to pay the biggest price for our marching on ahead as though
22 climate change was somebody else's problem. They will not
23 forgive us and why should they.

24 That's what I have to say.

25 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. Vivian Stockman and

1 on deck is Chuck Parker.

2 MS. STOCKMAN: My name is Vivian Stockman,
3 V-i-v-i-a-n S-t-o-c-k-m-a-n. I work for the Ohio Valley
4 Environmental Coalition which is based in Huntington, West
5 Virginia and I live in nearby Roan County.

6 Landowners be ware. This is not your
7 grandfather's oil and gas industry. Do not sign a lease
8 with Columbia without contacting a knowledgeable lawyer
9 first. Learn from your northern West Virginia neighbors.

10 The onslaught of deep shale hydraulic fracturing
11 better known as fracking for methane is transforming West
12 Virginia and not for the better.

13 Once quiet, rural areas are now industrial zones
14 where convoys of massive trucks clog and pummel roads and
15 increase accidents, where compressor stations despoil the
16 quiet, where light pollution ruins the night, and where
17 toxic emissions befoul the air and water sickening gas
18 workers and nearby community members, livestock, and
19 wildlife.

20 In deciding whether to approve this pipeline FERC
21 should weigh the fact that it will mean more fracking for
22 our already besieged communities.

23 For each point made here, I hope FERC will not
24 look at this one project alone, but will examine the
25 cumulative impacts of all pipelines proposed for West

1 Virginia and surrounding counties.

2 Energy companies tell us that more pipelines will
3 mean more national energy security. But it sure looks as
4 though one of the main themes of these pipelines is to
5 facilitate the export of the products of the deep shale
6 extraction.

7 FERC should examine whether there really is a
8 need for this pipeline and define what is meant by the word
9 "need" and note whose needs are being served.

10 FERC should examine the legal and constitutional
11 ramifications of allowing a for-profit corporation to use
12 eminent domain to seize land especially when that seizure is
13 conducted under the false banner of national energy
14 security.

15 Whenever a corporation wants to have its way with
16 our land, our air, and our water, all of which are our very
17 live support systems, then we hear a promise of jobs.
18 There's an argument these greedy corporations continue to
19 dish out that we can have either jobs or a clean
20 environment, but not both. That's hogwash.

21 FERC should take a good, hard look at the promise
22 -- that any promise of jobs a company is making and examine
23 the company's records with the health and safety of its
24 workers and consider whether investing in the pipeline
25 infrastructure is delaying or even replacing other potential

1 jobs such as those in the rapidly growing sector of solar
2 energy as well as farming, tourism, and pretty much any job
3 which requires clean water and clean air as well as healthy
4 workers.

5 If FERC imagines there is quote, "economic
6 necessity" unquote, for this project then FERC must evaluate
7 all of the ecosystem services and their dollar value that
8 will be eliminated or impacted by the construction,
9 maintenance, and operation of this pipeline. Ecosystem
10 services include such services offered by for instance
11 intact forests and those include flood control, erosion
12 control, water purification, atmospheric purification, these
13 are real services with real extreme economic value. There's
14 all sorts of studies on the values of these ecosystem
15 services and I feel confident in saying that FERC has
16 probably not considered these in considering projects and I
17 wish that that would be an underpinning of all future EIS's
18 -- the value of the destroyed ecosystem services.

19 In considering this pipeline, FERC must study the
20 capacity and ability for first responders who are often
21 volunteers and nearby hospitals to respond if or maybe we
22 should say when there is an explosion on the pipeline.
23 Since this pipeline would be transporting explosive
24 materials, FERC must examine the pipeline blast zone radius.
25 Who lives nearby? Who would -- what would be the effects of

1 an explosion on land, air, water, and humans and other
2 creatures living in the blast zone? What would be the
3 long-term health impacts?

4 FERC must also make certain the public
5 understands how huge the blast zone radius is in association
6 with pipelines of this diameter. It is FERC's duty to fully
7 assess all the alternatives to lessen or avoid environmental
8 impacts. And I hope the EIS will include a review of
9 alternatives including no pipeline or using existing
10 pipelines and existing corridors.

11 I hope the FERC will be examining the pipeline's
12 impacts during all phases of the project from construction
13 through completion. That includes potential use of fly ash
14 for backfill, coal fly ash and cumulative impacts following
15 the completion of the pipeline such as increased fracking
16 and the impact to water, wildlife and human health, more
17 radioactive wastes in our landfills, and increased climate
18 change for global warming.

19 FERC should evaluate whether it is a public
20 necessity to use eminent domain to build an additional
21 pipeline when there are existing pipelines and corridors
22 already in place. Especially in light of the fact that the
23 pipeline construction would allow for the export of methane.

24 FERC should examine what implications this
25 pipeline will have in terms of climate change and what it

1 will do to lock West Virginia into continued reliance on
2 fossil fuels especially in light of the rapid worldwide
3 growth of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.

4 In light of the above, FERC should examine the
5 moral issues involved with this pipeline and what allowing
6 its construction would mean for future generations in terms
7 of impacts on climate and water resources.

8 Further, isn't it better to leave some gas in the
9 ground for future generations rather than ship it out
10 overseas as fast as possible for no need other than the
11 fossil fuel industry's need for more profit?

12 Compression stations and their construction will
13 diminish air quality and have increased noise levels.
14 Recent studies are showing how much these compressor
15 stations are impacting human health. And the pipeline's
16 compressor stations near communities, we should look into
17 how we can mitigate any adverse effects from those.

18 Okay. Constructing the pipeline will increase
19 forest fragmentation, so I would hope FERC will evaluate how
20 many acres of forest will be fragmented and the impact on
21 local wildlife. I would hope that FERC will inventory rare,
22 threatened, and endangered species that rely on habitat in
23 the proposed route. For example, the cerulean warbler's
24 population has declined dramatically in recent decades and
25 it's one of its last strongholds is here in West Virginia.

1 FERC should evaluate how the proposed pipeline
2 will impact this and other at-risk species. I hope that
3 FERC will evaluate impacts of the increased sedimentation
4 from runoff and top soil during construction. And we're
5 sort of a state known for outdoor recreation and
6 recreational opportunities and I hope FERC will take that
7 into consideration in evaluating what impacts this pipeline
8 could have. And of course you know the pipeline will be
9 crossing streams, rivers, and wetlands. I'm hopeful that
10 we'll have a complete assessment of that sort of damage and
11 what could happen to springs and drinking water sources,
12 especially in an area where so many people rely on
13 groundwater for their wells. And I've got more, but -- I'll
14 submit it for the record.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. Next up we have
17 Chuck Parker and on deck is John Hudson.

18 MR. PARKER: Chuck Parker, I'm a 20-year member
19 of the Operating Engineers. A resident of Jackson County.
20 I'm thankful for the jobs that this is going to bring to
21 this county, this region.

22 With Columbia, they've been doing a lot of
23 pipelines throughout this state. Everyone has been safe,
24 they've used local people to build these pipeline. They're
25 safe environmentally friendly, they have more checks and

1 balances on the environment than -- than a lot of others.
2 For that I thank FERC for making sure that they do their
3 job.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. John Hudson, you're
6 up and on deck is Rob Richard.

7 MR. HUDSON: John Hudson, H-u-d-s-o-n. I was
8 looking at the thermometer here when we come in and I
9 remember that commercial where the boy turned on the light
10 and I think sometimes we forget how we get all of this heat
11 and these good things that come. It's by pipelines bringing
12 it to us. If it wasn't for these pipelines all across -- I
13 came from Charleston. I bet I crossed 100 pipelines that
14 you don't even know they're there because the grass has
15 grown back and everything is perfect. And we don't even
16 know they're there. They serve us in so many ways from our
17 water to our fuel to everything you can name. Pipelines are
18 an integral part of the United States and our
19 infrastructure. Having said that, this is about jobs. We
20 sit here and if this pipeline is approved, there's going to
21 be thousands, not hundreds, but thousands of jobs for the
22 state of West Virginia.

23 And these jobs aren't minimum wage jobs. These
24 jobs are jobs \$25, 30, 40 an hour jobs with benefits, with
25 insurance, with pension, that our neighbors and things are

1 doing. We've got the laborers and the operators, I'm with
2 the Teamsters. These people are professional pipeline
3 builders, just like you have professional doctors and
4 lawyers. This is what we do for a living.

5 These people have, for years in here came in and
6 built pipelines and put them back to where -- what I just
7 said earlier. You can drive across here, you don't even
8 know they're there because they're trained professionals.

9 They say a dollar for every one that's spent goes
10 seven times. If that's true, there's going to be several
11 billion dollars spent on this pipeline here in the state of
12 West Virginia, not only in wages, in taxes where they're
13 going. The schools are going to benefit. The roads are
14 going to benefit. Everybody is going to benefit. It just
15 doesn't end when we get done building this pipeline. And
16 this pipeline will be built by the best craftsmen in the
17 state of West Virginia. You're not going to get a better
18 built pipeline.

19 Not only that, but when we come through all of
20 these towns we're going to buy parts from them, we're going
21 to buy ice from them. We're going to buy everything in the
22 world from them. It all stays local. This thing could be
23 -- not can be, but will be a multi-billion dollar boom for
24 the state of West Virginia. And all of these people here
25 are neighbors that are going to work on this thing.

1 Again, I remember a political election years ago
2 when they said, you know, it's all about the economy.
3 That's what this is about. It's about the economy. Coal in
4 the state of West Virginia is down. Pipelines is coming up.
5 Without natural gas -- natural gas it's the cheapest, most
6 abundant, cleanest resource we have. How does it get any
7 better than that? I don't know.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. Next we have Rob
10 Richard.

11 MR. RICHARD: Rob Richard, R-o-b R-i-c-h-a-r-d.
12 Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the body on
13 behalf of the West Virginia Laborer District Council.

14 MS. WACHHOLDER: Can you speak into the --

15 MR. RICHARD: And a half a million dedicated --
16 skilled and dedicated members of the Laborers International
17 Union of North America. We are here today because fighting
18 for American energy of the future is critical for our city
19 and for our county, country, and working men and women. We
20 are advocates for the Mountaineer Xpress pipeline for many
21 of the same reasons a broad array of groups are; because of
22 our nation needs less reliance on energy from nations and
23 regions that want to destroy our country.

24 We support this project because hundreds of
25 thousands of families including thousands of Liuna families

1 in our communities and across the country depend on energy
2 work.

3 These are not just jobs. This is not just a
4 pipeline. Construction, energy, and infrastructure is a
5 career which can lead to steady, reliable work and
6 opportunities for advancement. It is a lifeline to the
7 middle class. We believe approval of this project will
8 benefit thousands of working men and women who rely on a
9 steady, affordable supply of fuel for transportation and for
10 their homes.

11 Because we have the experience, skills, and
12 dedication to make sure energy work is done safely and
13 protect communities and workers, we can help this industry
14 continue to grow. And on behalf of the Liuna members we
15 have safely built pipelines since 1949. Our organizations
16 invest more than 100 million a year on skills training
17 including 164 hours of training alone on pipeline
18 construction.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. That completes the
21 list of people who signed up. We would love to welcome
22 anyone who is interested in speaking.

23 Please state your name and spell it for the
24 record.

25 MS. PRUNTY: My name is Paula Prunty, P-a-u-l-a

1 P-r-u-n-t-y. I want to start off by saying, I love my
2 state. I was raised here and look what's happened to coal.
3 I mean, I've got family that's starving to death. And we've
4 got to bring -- we have to have energy and this is the
5 cleanest way to do it. This is going to bring the economy,
6 the motels we'll be staying in, the schools we'll be
7 supporting. The -- I mean, it's going to be -- we need
8 this. We need this. Look at -- look at all the people up
9 in Bin County and Lincoln County and stuff that they're
10 starving to death. You know, we're taking the coal out,
11 we've got to replace it.

12 We've got to be able to have clean energy. And
13 there's just so many people that will benefit from this.
14 And it's really a good idea. And I'm one of them and the
15 operators and the teamsters and the laborers, I mean, this
16 is a good. This is good for our economy all the way around.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. Anyone else?

19 MR. ROGERS: Yes, my name is Bryan Rogers,
20 B-r-y-a-n R-o-g-e-r-s. I guess I'm the only one that's
21 speaking here that's not really economically affected by
22 this. I'm talking about the humanity. I'm a landowner. No
23 other landowner has spoke here.

24 Okay. Have you ever heard of the PHMSA? You
25 know who the PHMSA is. For those of you in here that do

1 not, they are the Pipeline Hazard Materials Safety
2 Administration. You said you've been putting in pipelines
3 since 1949. Since 1959 they have tracked the pipelines.
4 The incidents of significant failures has increased since
5 1955. In 2012 it went from 61 significant failures 19 or
6 1912 -- 1913 was 69, 1914 or 2014 was 75. It's increased
7 since the '70s.

8 I'm not here to talk about a rabbit or a turtle.
9 I'm talking about landowners where they're going to live
10 near this pipeline and someone mentioned the significant
11 barrier what the hazardous rating is of this pipe. Does
12 anybody know? Do you know? You're FERC. You're the
13 environmentalist. It's a 1400 psi pressured line. The
14 hazardous radius is 900 feet. If you're within 900 feet of
15 that pipe when it blows, it's a total failure. That total
16 failure is catastrophic.

17 Now you want to talk about laborers, teamsters.
18 Who builds the pipe? China? The failures of the pipe, this
19 PHMSA says weld failure, corrosion, weld equipment failure,
20 unknown causes. This is all what is happening to materials
21 and fittings, you guys know if you work in the construction
22 industry. I was in it back in the 1980s. We'd have gob
23 piles of pipes that we couldn't use because it was no good.
24 It wouldn't hold the pressures. Yet, you guys are here
25 because of your almighty dollar. I'm here because this is

1 on -- I'm here because this is our land. This is what
2 you're taking from us. We farm this land. We have houses
3 near this land. And I would like to see other landowners
4 stand up and stop this economic B-S and tell them how they
5 feel and what's going on.

6 The EPA has governance over this National
7 Environmental Protection Act. Do they have input in this?
8 I'm not a fan of the EPA but I know that there's a problem
9 with this. Do you think those people at Sissonville know
10 that line was under there? That's why legislature went so
11 far, but they didn't go far enough. The legislature has
12 enacted in law that they cannot build a line within a
13 hundred feet of a house. That's not far enough.

14 You know, you laborers, you teamsters, you do
15 your job, but you cannot find the faults in pipes,
16 materials, seams, and fittings. That's all I've got to say.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. BOWYER: My name is Dave Bowyer, B-o-w-y-e-r.
19 And I have -- I'm a landowner and I have property on about a
20 half mile from where the line is going through and where the
21 compressor station is going to be. And in looking at this
22 process, you list four, six, ten things that you consider,
23 geology and soils, land use, water resources, all of those
24 are important.

25 What I ask the Commission to look at during their

1 environmental impact study is the noise pollution because
2 there will be a compressor station within a half mile of our
3 house and some of my neighbors here they will be a lot
4 closer than that. Noise pollution is constant. When you
5 have -- when you build a pipeline, and I agree, there can be
6 failures.

7 In the interest of full disclosure, my father
8 worked for the gas company for 40 years. Not Columbia, but
9 another gas company. There are failures. Those occur
10 rarely. I'm just saying. I don't have a number, but I'll
11 say rarely. But the compressor station and the noise
12 associated with that compressor station is constant, 24
13 hours a day, seven days a week. And it does have a medical
14 impact on the people around it. So I would implore the
15 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to take those into
16 account along with the other aspects. I'm not sure what
17 kind of percentages you all use, but I can tell you that
18 that will be something that is impactful to human life.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. WACHHOLDER: Okay. Is there anyone else?

21 MR. MOORE: My name is Joe Moore, J-o-e
22 M-o-o-r-e. I am a landowner. I have some of the same
23 concerns as this gentleman. I'm also a union member, a
24 disabled union member. And I appreciate the good work that
25 you guys do, but I'm also a steelworker and I know what took

1 over two million of our -- of our union members out of work,
2 it was the cheap steel that was coming from China.

3 MS. WACHHOLDER: Speak into the microphone,
4 please.

5 MR. MOORE: It was the cheap steel that was
6 coming from China. It's unreliable, it's unpredictable.
7 You don't know what you're getting from one day to the next.

8 And I'm very concerned about the blast radius
9 myself. And another thing is this little thing you had in
10 there, just mentioned once, was eminent domain. I looked
11 around a long time to find the mineral rights for my
12 property. I own the surface and the mineral rights and
13 you're going to come through and just put whatever you want,
14 wherever you want it. And I don't think that's the proper
15 thing to do.

16 The noise pollution and all the things that these
17 people have talked about is fine, but the danger to life and
18 limb to me is the most important thing. I'm very concerned
19 about the explosion and the blast radius. When I think of
20 the explode or the blast radius, I think of the recent
21 explosion we had at Sissonville. That was pretty impressive
22 and I don't think it was anywhere near the psi that this
23 pipe is going to be generating, nor the flow capabilities.

24 And I think we ought to take a look at that
25 especially where it's at. My neighbor has got a house

1 that's going to be less than 150 feet from it already. And
2 I kind of like him. It's rare to have a good neighbor. So
3 I would like to keep him.

4 That's about all I have to put in. I hope you
5 guys get some jobs.

6 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you.

7 MR. RIDENOUR: My name is Glen Ridenour,
8 R-i-d-e-n-o-u-r. And I'm a landowner also. And this
9 pipeline is coming right through the middle of our property.
10 And I understand all about the jobs and the environmental
11 impact and all this type of thing. But let's face it, this
12 pipeline is for money and that's all it's for. For Columbia
13 Gas to make billions and billions of dollars, which they
14 will and which they are entitled to make. However, when
15 we're talking about the acquisition of someone's land, there
16 should be some kind of provisions in there where that
17 landowner can get more than a one-time pop and they keep
18 their rights to use that land forever. And that landowner
19 gets nothing on down the road where the gas company makes
20 billions off of it.

21 There should be some kind of way in there that
22 the landowner can make -- not an equal amount, but more
23 money on down the road and stuff. It shouldn't be just a
24 one-time pop. The construction people also, it's a one-time
25 pop for them. Although their job may last two years, but

1 that's all it would be, you know, is that two years. So my
2 concern is that there ought to be something else other than
3 a one-time pop for the landowners.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. STEED: I talk pretty loud, can you hear me?

6 Okay. My name is David.

7 [PAUSE]

8 MR. STEED: My name is David Steeb. Oh, sorry.

9 [PAUSE]

10 MR. STEED: Do I spell my name?

11 MS. WACHHOLDER: Go ahead.

12 MR. STEED: My name is David Steed, D-a-v-i-d
13 S-t-e-e-d. I'm a member of the laborers union. I didn't
14 plan on speaking until I heard a couple things that a few
15 people said. I'll just be real brief.

16 I've been in the laborers union pipeline mostly
17 for the last four years. These companies that I've worked
18 for spend millions of dollars making sure the environment is
19 taken care of. They're the environmental crews, four, five,
20 six of them on a job and they make sure that everything is
21 put back and sometimes it looks better than what it did when
22 we first got there. And as far as the pipe is concerned, I
23 work a lot on the stringing crews and the bending crews and
24 the set up crews. In the last four years every joint of
25 pipe that I have been around says "Made in the USA" right on

1 it.

2 That's all I have to say. Thanks.

3 MS. WACHHOLDER: Anything -- any other
4 volunteers?

5 MR. TOSH: My name is T. Tosh, T-o-s-h. I'm a
6 landowner. I've been to China, I've been to Alaska, I've
7 seen the pipeline in Alaska. I've seen a lot of
8 construction. Chinese pipe is pretty much junk most of the
9 time unless it's inspected. I trust that the powers to be
10 are going to be -- since it's high pressure, they're going
11 to be surely X-raying this pipe which would indicate any
12 kind of defects in the pipe. There's a natural decomposure
13 of that pipe over time and that has to be taken into
14 consideration and maintenance. And I believe you're panels
15 and all, the EPA and all the people that you assign to this
16 pipeline will take a look at that and keep that in mind. So
17 I don't really have any worries about that. As far as the
18 construction people, we have people that are good people and
19 we have bad people. That's a matter of one thing that we
20 don't have any control over, but as landowners, I do agree
21 that the compensation should be made fair and that the
22 location of the pipe should in fact be environmentally
23 friendly. But it's a better choice than any kind of wind or
24 solar power that costs two to three or maybe four times as
25 much money as it's going to cost for this natural gas to be

1 used. And we have more of it.

2 We have a tremendous amount of failures and waste
3 of government money on wind power, on electric cars,
4 electric this and electric that and trying to replace fossil
5 fuel because they don't do their research or homework. At
6 least we have a background with petroleum. I've been a
7 member of the Petroleum Institute for a long time, since
8 1965, I believe. And they're pretty -- pretty knowledgeable
9 in this field. So we have -- we have something that we can
10 use, we have something that's available. We have a lot of
11 quality people that are involved in this. Their rates of
12 accidents do go up, but that's due to time, most of it. And
13 a lot of it is due to earthquakes and things that we have no
14 control over. We're just human beings and the environment,
15 we don't have that much control over the environment. This
16 global warming isn't caused by us burning and doing this and
17 doing that. We have more exhaling of contaminants from
18 volcanoes and natural disasters than we do from anything
19 else. If somebody would read the other parts instead of
20 just these reports by the government and reports by certain
21 people that have these certain values, that's all they do is
22 they look at the bad stuff. Look at the good stuff.

23 It's good for the economy of the state, it's good
24 for the people that are going to be getting a job no matter
25 if it's one year or two years, it's better than not having

1 any money at all. And we're going to have some gas coming
2 out that will be cheaper than coal. And since we have a
3 president that doesn't want to do anything about coal, which
4 we have a lot of, and could change that into a cleaner
5 energy, we have to rely on natural gas, which is cleaner.
6 And I have run personally boilers that would run on coal and
7 gas. They want to shut down the coal, then you've got a
8 problem with boilers. Boilers can't run on -- all boilers
9 can't run on both. They have to be converted, that costs
10 extra money but at least it can be done.

11 But if you don't have coal or gas, you can't run
12 a boiler. You can't wood-fire a boiler. Besides that, it's
13 even against the law in the state of Washington to burn your
14 own fireplace. So I think we should all think about in the
15 long run and in the short run everybody will benefit.

16 And about our children, I have children and a lot
17 of people in this room have children and they're not going
18 to be in any kind of dire straights just because we have a
19 pipeline that supplies gas unless it's mishandled and the
20 government is in charge of that. The government usually
21 fails. We hope in this case that they don't. We hope in
22 this case that they have a little bit more respect. And I
23 think due to the tremendous pressure on this pipe, I think
24 everybody's got their head in the right place. And I think
25 it's a good thing and that's all I have to say.

1 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you. Any other volunteers
2 to speak?

3 MR. MULLINS: My name is David Mullins,
4 M-u-l-l-i-n-s. And I think folks have a little better --
5 can hear you a little better if you talk like this. But you
6 need us to talk in the microphone. Everybody hear me okay?

7 I didn't come here prepared to speak this
8 evening, but -- but I feel like I had to. I'm a resident of
9 Jackson County. I'm a retired member of the operating
10 engineers. And we too are concerned about global warming.
11 We have children and grandchildren. It is a strong concern
12 of ours.

13 We know that these projects can be built safely
14 if they are made to be built safely. If folks can get by
15 with things, they will. But they can be made safely.

16 We're also concerned about building this pipeline
17 through some of the most pristine territory in the state of
18 West Virginia. It's beautiful. No place else in the world.
19 We want to keep it that way.

20 What that really means is if it's done correctly,
21 these folks will get more man-hours. To push it through and
22 do it quick is not good for anyone. It's not good for us,
23 it's not good for these guys. So, we want to make sure that
24 it's done properly. We want to make sure that the
25 landowners are respected. We want to make sure that they're

1 compensated properly for their property and heard when and
2 where this line goes through their property, not some of the
3 best meadowlands they've got, they should have some say-so
4 about where these lines go.

5 The noise pollution, that can be -- that can be
6 helped too. Absolutely. There's technology available to
7 rectify all those things if it's done properly. We would
8 like to have it built, but not at all cost.

9 Hello?

10 Again, I didn't come here prepared to speak, but
11 I probably would have a lot more to say if I have time to
12 think about it. But thank you so much for your time and I
13 appreciate everybody's concern.

14 Oh, one more thing, if you don't mind. We also
15 build hydro -- they also build hydroelectric dams and other
16 renewable resources. They install solar power panels. If
17 we have enough of that, we won't need gas. And I think
18 that's the way to go personally. But we can -- those
19 provide jobs as well and investment in everywhere they go.
20 But I would prefer to have that pipeline and not need it
21 than need it and not have it.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. WACHHOLDER: Anyone else?

24 MR. MOORE: Joe Moore, J-o-e M-o-o-r-e. Dave is
25 usually not prepared to speak, but he's always usually

1 pretty good at it.

2 MS. WACHHOLDER: Can you speak into the
3 microphone?

4 MR. MOORE: Sure. I forgot to mention a thing,
5 you know, we always say the government, but when I was
6 dealing with Columbia gas for the -- I guess easement for
7 them to come on my property to do the environmental impact
8 survey. We were trying to negotiation and we finally got
9 down the point where the team manager had to come. And we
10 didn't sign an agreement. I gave them a verbal approval for
11 them to come on and then they were supposed to bring me an
12 agreement to sign. That never happened. I got a phone
13 call. I said, well, I've never got an agreement to sign.
14 They're supposed to bring me agreement. They still never
15 brought it. It's been eight months, four phone calls, still
16 no agreement. And I'm assuming since there's blue marks all
17 over my property that they've been there.

18 So I'm not real sure how much I can trust
19 Columbia Gas to keep their word and do what they said they
20 were going to do. These gentlemen and ladies, I know are
21 fine construction workers. I didn't mean to imply anything
22 else earlier. But I do know again right now that the steel
23 industry is closing factories and mills because China is
24 dumping -- is dumping cheap steel on the market again. I
25 don't know if Chile is going to start doing it again or not,

1 but I know China is and we're losing steel jobs again. So,
2 that's still another -- you know, another factor for me.
3 Right now is not a good time for me to consider that
4 pipeline to be safe.

5 That's all I got to do. Thanks.

6 MS. YUAN: Thank you, again.

7 Okay. Anyone else?

8 (No response.)

9 MS. YUAN: Okay. So that's the end of our
10 speakers' list. Without any more speakers the formal part
11 of this meeting will conclude.

12 On behalf of the Federal Energy Regulatory
13 Commission I would like to thank you all for coming out
14 tonight.

15 Let the record show that the Mountaineer Xpress
16 Project in Ripley, West Virginia concluded at 7:04 p.m.

17 Thank you.

18 (Whereupon, at 7:04 p.m., the meeting was
19 adjourned.)

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