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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Office of Energy Projects

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Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC Docket No. CP16-357-000
Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC Docket No. CP16-361-000
- - - - - x

MOUNTAINEER XPRESS PROJECT
GULF XPRESS PROJECT

Sleepy Hollow Golf & Country Club
3780 Sleepy Hollow Drive
Hurricane, WV 25526
Monday, March 20, 2017

A public verbal comment session on the EA was held,
pursuant to notice. starting at 5:02 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G

2 CYNTHIA ELLIS: My name is Cynthia Ellis. C Y N
3 T H I A, E L L I S. I wish to acknowledge this opportunity
4 to comment. I reside in Putnam County, near the proposed
5 route of the pipeline. The MXP DEIS is insufficient to
6 allow concerned citizens to evaluate environmental impacts.
7 Here are some incomplete or missing components. While
8 citizens have tried to follow the progress of this proposal,
9 they have watched for publications concerning the MXP. This
10 DEIS combines information on that MXP proposal with another,
11 the Gulf Express Project. This is confounding and onerous.

12 In this day of digitization it would have been
13 simple for the preparing team to maintain single streams of
14 information. This duality has made a hardship for citizen
15 reviewers. FERC should require Columbia to reissue separate
16 draft environmental impact statements and allow additional
17 time for citizen review.

18 The DEIS is deficient in its treatment of
19 invasive plant species. Several much smaller lines cross my
20 property, these have been a definite source of Japanese
21 stilt grass and other nonnative vegetation. Invasive plants
22 are a long term burden and a great detriment to privately
23 and publicly owned fields and forests. Although FERC in
24 this DEIS has issued a recommendation for a noxious invasive
25 weed management plan, there is not now one in place.

1 Similarly, the DEIS pays insufficient heed to the
2 seeds used for revegetation. The DEIS failed to note a link
3 to Columbia's environmental construction standards, which
4 would have proved very helpful for reviewers. At any rate,
5 those standards call for a seed mixture of three types. A
6 much better mixture would be one such as Ernst, E R N S T
7 Seeds Pipeline mixture with switch grass with a six-seed
8 type mixture including several much more beneficial native
9 seeds. Additionally there needs to be a requirement for the
10 use of weed free straw.

11 The DEIS shows a lack of knowledge regarding
12 wildlife. Statements on page ES 9 say: Species that rely on
13 forested lands which could take decades to return to pre-
14 construction condition would also move into nearby forested
15 habitat. This would not result in a significant impact for
16 general wildlife but could have greater impact on species
17 that rely on undisturbed interior forests. This statement
18 disregards species that occupy areas already at carrying
19 capacity. The statement implies that moving into is easily
20 achieved -- particularly in some bird species, this may not
21 occur.

22 Also limiting the clearing of forests to a time
23 frame before nesting activities is not sufficient. Forest
24 dwelling birds rely upon the habitat to support them
25 throughout the year. The DEIS seems to focus only on

1 migratory birds. A complete impact statement would take
2 into regard year round resident birds as well. They, too,
3 will incur impacts from loss of habitat and from the
4 disruption by construction.

5 The DEIS discusses mussels and notes that studies
6 are incomplete. Beyond the recommendation that construction
7 not commence before studies are final, neither should
8 authorization for the project be issued.

9 The DEIS lists that there are 890 current gas
10 wells within .25 miles of the MXP, yet there is no
11 discussion of the cumulative emissions from these wells,
12 coupled with the addition of discharges from this new, very
13 large line. This is a health impacts lapse in the review.
14 There is no supporting evidence for indicating that air
15 quality degradation would be minimal.

16 A final traffic management plan has not been
17 prepared. Columbia Gas has not complied with Section 106 of
18 the NHPA. There will be noise associated with the HDD
19 drilling at the Kanawah River. It is not sufficient to say
20 that there, quote, "may" unquote, be compensation or
21 relocation for residents.

22 There are concerns regarding steep slope
23 construction. Columbia should provide assurances that slope
24 failures, such as those occurring at the Columbia Gas
25 Celanese Pipeline corridor on Peters Mountain. That's P E T

1 E R S, no apostrophe. Peters Mountain, Giles County,
2 Virginia in 2015 will not happen here. Evidence should be
3 presented as to how procedures have improved since those
4 flawed executions.

5 A revised DEIS is requested. This would allow
6 citizens to be fully informed of the proposed impacts. The
7 DEIS does not recommend a programmatic review of this line
8 with others present and planned. Someone familiar with
9 repeated calls for such review was Normal Bay, B A Y, who
10 only recently vacated the chairmanship of the commission.
11 He agreed that such reviews are warranted regarding the
12 provision of full information to all those concerned.

13 There have been problems with the release of the
14 DEIS and the comment period. There has not been sufficient
15 time for citizens to access and study the DEIS. A one month
16 extension of the comment period should be granted. Thank
17 you.

18 BARBARA JIVIDEN: My name is Barbara Jividen, and
19 that's J I V I D E N. Do I make comments or ask questions?

20 THE REPORTER: Well, you could do both but we
21 don't answer questions.

22 BARBARA JIVIDEN: Okay. I understand. I have a
23 concern about the pipeline going under the river at Midway.
24 The pipeline runs 500 feet from my home. It goes under the
25 highway, it goes under a railroad track within 500 feet of

1 my home; progresses through a field and then under the
2 river.

3 The river is very shallow there. As a matter of
4 fact, I've lived there for many years and I've watched
5 tugboats go up and down the river. They kick up sediment,
6 mud comes to the surface. It concerns me that that pipeline
7 is going under right there. The depth, 12 feet in some
8 places.

9 I have a question as to the gauge of the pipe.
10 I'm wondering if it would be a different gauge that goes
11 under the river as opposed to other places. Will it be a
12 different gauge under the railroad track and under the
13 highway?

14 I'm concerned about an evacuation plan with the
15 Buffalo and Eleanor fire departments and police departments
16 and surrounding departments. I don't know if anything like
17 that is put in place. I realize if there's a blast that
18 occurs close, I'll be dead, within 500 feet of that
19 pipeline. I don't think anybody would want that that close
20 to their home. But I am concerned about it. Evacuation
21 probably wouldn't help me or my family but it might help
22 others that live within the blast zone.

23 Those are my biggest concerns. I don't know how
24 much thought went in to putting that pipeline under the
25 Kanawha River where it's going under. I would like to know

1 why that spot was chosen. I have an idea, perhaps why that
2 spot was chosen, because that land belongs to someone who is
3 involved in the gas company business.

4 The line, after it crosses the Kanawha River,
5 comes up and crosses under another highway, route 817, I
6 believe that is now. It used to be the old 34. It proceeds
7 to go right by a very large manufacturing company that
8 produces screens for mining companies and that company, at
9 times, produces, and I don't know, you know, if they're a
10 company, I don't blame them. But they produce loud shaking
11 noises from there. I don't want the company shut down. I'm
12 happy that it's there, it brings jobs and that's wonderful,
13 that's not my complaint.

14 My complaint is, I don't know if the gas company
15 realizes, or even if that manufacturing company realizes how
16 close that pipeline is going to be to it. It is also 500
17 feet where it comes up. I've been over there and looked at
18 it. To me that seems a little dangerous. After it comes
19 up, crossing the highway over there 817, it goes directly in
20 past, very close, to an industrial park, Fraziers Bottom
21 industrial park. There are many businesses in there. Tasty
22 Blends, there's an electrical company in there, just all
23 sorts of little businesses; and it's still growing, and
24 there are places there for more businesses to go in.

25 The pipeline proceeds on right through the

1 backyard of the man that owns the field next to me.
2 Strange, I find, but such is life. I think those are
3 basically my biggest concerns. Kind of brief, but that's
4 it. As I said, I didn't have it written down but it's been
5 in my mind. I've made these comments online to FERC. But
6 it concerns me that it's so close to me as I think it would
7 most anybody. And I thank you for your time.

8 BRUCE BANNERMAN: My name is Bruce Bannerman. B
9 R U C E, B A N N E R M A N. Post Office Box 257, Culloden,
10 West Virginia. I am going to get part of the MXP gas line
11 around about milepost 160 on Lee Creek Road immediately
12 north of interstate 64.

13 One of the concerns I have is that when they talk
14 about the hydrostatic testing of the line, they're going to
15 take 3 point-something million gallons of water out of Lee
16 Creek. Y'all need to look at the Lee Creek watershed. I
17 think you're talking about a few hundred thousand minutes to
18 get that much water out of Lee Creek at normal water flow.
19 Lee Creek is only about a mile and a half to two miles long,
20 the watershed is one valley wide. Good luck getting 3
21 million unless Noah brings his ark through again.

22 I'm sure there's others, but that's as far as I
23 got wading through your CD. Thank you very much.

24 KATI HOLLAND: My name is Kati Holland. K A T I,
25 H O L L A N D. I came here today just because I am a

1 concerned citizen. I do live in Cabell County. I haven't
2 learned a lot about this pipeline but what I have learned, I
3 am very concerned that this plan isn't quite as thorough as
4 I want it to be.

5 I just read a little excerpt from page 42 on the
6 DEIS that really concerned me talking about the effect on
7 air quality, water quality, and just the general wildlife.
8 It said it would probably be minimal to no effects. In my
9 research, like I said, as a concerned citizen and a health
10 care professional, I'm a nurse practitioner -- that is not
11 what I've seen.

12 I've seen a lot of water issues: The folks in
13 Pennsylvania who can't drink their water anymore. The folks
14 in Texas who are catching their water on fire. The
15 earthquakes in Oklahoma as well as the chronic nosebleeds.
16 I was just reading a health care article on chronic
17 nosebleeds in Pennsylvania. I definitely think that we, as
18 West Virginians, have the right for a thorough assessment on
19 exactly what this amount of pipelines in this area, what
20 kind of impact that would have. I think that that concept
21 of the, like I said, the amount of pipelines going through
22 this area should be further assessed.

23 I guess really, I think that on a very practical
24 thing, I do request that this comment period be extended. I
25 don't think that there's been long enough for the normal

1 citizen to read through a 400 page book. I know I work full
2 time and I've just gotten in on this but just what I've
3 heard about it, I really want to learn more; and like I
4 said, my first initial reaction is a little bit concerned.
5 I'm not going to say that we don't need jobs, because I do
6 think West Virginia certainly needs jobs but again, from
7 what I've read, a lot of times these folks are from out of
8 town and a lot of times what's left after the pipelines are
9 built is not really justified to have the jobs.

10 I think that's about it.

11 (Pause)

12 (Whereupon at 5:16 p.m., the verbal comment
13 session concluded.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

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3 This is to certify that the attached proceeding
4 before the FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION in the
5 Matter of:

6 Name of Proceeding:

7 MOUNTAINEER XPRESS PROJECT

8 GULF XPRESS PROJECT

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15 Docket No.: CP16-357-000 & CP16-361-000

16 Place: Hurricane, WV

17 Date: March 20, 2017

18 were held as herein appears, and that this is the original
19 transcript thereof for the file of the Federal Energy
20 Regulatory Commission, and is a full correct transcription
21 of the proceedings.

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Daniel Hawkins

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Official Reporter

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3780 Sleepy Hollow Drive
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pursuant to notice. starting at 5:02 p.m.

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

2 MS. BLAKEMAN: My name is Robin Blakeman,
3 R-o-b-i-n B-l-a-k-e-m-a-n and I work with OVEC the Ohio
4 Valley Environmental Coalition. I'm also a resident of
5 Cabell County, Huntington area West Virginia -- this local
6 area here.

7 The comments that I am going to deliver today are
8 official comments from the Ohio Valley Environmental
9 Coalition. We may also submit these in writing, we may
10 expand these as we go along.

11 I'm very concerned about this pipeline. And one
12 of our major concerns is the connection point to the SM-80.
13 We know that that is not what we are here to talk about
14 tonight but we understand this pipeline -- the SM-80 is a
15 very old pipeline although some portions of it are being
16 renovated. We are still highly concerned about the extra
17 gas pressure to that pipeline.

18 I'm going to hit the high points of our written
19 comments. First of all we request an extension of the
20 comment period on the Mountaineer Xpress, Gulf Xpress Draft
21 Environmental Impact Statement of a minimum of one month
22 because we had a very short notification period.

23 In fact, we only received the CD copy of the DEIS
24 about 10 days ago in our office. This is not sufficient
25 time to review a document of the size the Draft

1 Environmental Impact Statement where this project is.

2 The addition of the Gulf Xpress information into
3 the Mountaineer Xpress DEIS is confusing for many of our
4 members and citizens and it necessitates additional time to
5 analyze the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

6 Since the Gulf Xpress information is included in
7 this DEIS we have requested additional public meetings to be
8 scheduled for those communities in Kentucky that would be
9 impacted by that pipeline and its associated compressor
10 stations for the Gulf Xpress. There currently are no
11 meetings scheduled in Kentucky.

12 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement failed
13 to adequately consider the regional cumulative impact of all
14 of the proposed pipeline projects in our region in terms of
15 potential leakages and explosions, habitat fragmentation,
16 impact on human health, impacts on water resources and more.

17 FERC should address the fact that this and other
18 pipelines will mean more fracking related activities for
19 already besieged communities. Former FERC Chair Norman Bay
20 is quoted as recently saying, "even if not required by NEPA
21 in light of the heightened public interest and in the
22 interest of good government," he believes "the Commission
23 should analyze the environmental impact effects of increased
24 regional gas protection from Marcellus and Utica". This
25 DEIS should heed Bay's comments.

1 The Draft Environmental Impact
2 Statement fails to examine the real possibility of
3 over-capacity. That is -- too many pipelines built and too
4 little available gas to move through those pipelines.
5 Climate change impacts from these proposed pipelines coupled
6 with all the other proposed pipelines in our region should
7 be a major focus of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
8 but this DEIS fails to address what this pipeline build-out
9 will have in terms of increasing climate change.

10 Methane and other emissions resulting from
11 increased drilling of the state's shale fields in this area
12 which would be brought on by having these pipelines built
13 would contribute significantly to global climate change we
14 believe.

15 The DEIS fails to adequately consider impacts on
16 the Ohio River, the tap water source for 3 to 5 million
17 people. This project jeopardizes the Ohio River along with
18 its associated projects, the Leach Express and the still in
19 the proposal stages Buckeye Express.

20 This Draft Environmental Impact Statement should
21 examine whether there really is a need for this pipeline and
22 define what is meant by the word need and whose needs are
23 being served.

24 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement should
25 examine the legal and constitutional ramifications of

1 allowing for profit corporate use of eminent domain to seize
2 land -- especially when that seizure is conducted under the
3 false banner of national energy security.

4 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to
5 honestly examine alternatives. One alternative is to build
6 renewable energy projects in lieu of these pipelines. The
7 Draft Environmental Impact Statement should consider whether
8 there are alternatives for energy production, not
9 specifically delivering natural gas to a certain location.

10 We want to note that these critical aspects of
11 project planning are still lacking landslide risk assessment
12 and mitigation plans, full mapping and analysis of ground
13 water and well sources, stream crossing restoration plans,
14 HDD inadvertently turned contingency plan for the Canal
15 River Crossing, other hydrological reports and plans,
16 invasive obnoxious weed infestation plans.

17 Endangered species reports, including the U.S.
18 Fish and Wildlife Service determination for the MXP impacts
19 on the Diamond Darter, multiple species of endangered
20 mussels, the Indiana bat and myotis bats.

21 Traffic management plans, noise level evaluations
22 and mitigation plans, archeological and cultural resource
23 surveys -- there are several things that we disagree with in
24 this statement. One is that the majority of cumulative
25 impacts will be temporary and minor when considered in

1 combination with the potential gains in jobs.

2 We know that construction jobs for these
3 pipelines will be of a temporary nature and often out of
4 state contractors will be supplying these jobs. As for
5 property taxes we are doubtful that any easement property
6 taxes paid by an interstate pipeline company would
7 adequately compensate communities that could be adversely
8 affected by the installation or operation of these
9 pipelines.

10 We are also well aware that the contents of this
11 pipeline seem primarily destined for international export,
12 not for domestic usage. We question whether adequate
13 evacuation and/or crisis plans have been developed to
14 protect citizens and property in all communities to be
15 impacted by these pipelines.

16 Without plans in place for a two mile evacuation
17 zone around the entire route of the pipeline, communities
18 could be at risk of serious financial and physical harm. We
19 agree strongly with the statement found on page 44, "The
20 Mountaineer Xpress impacts on upland interior forest habitat
21 and large core forest areas including habitat for the
22 Cerulean Warbler would be significant."

23 This is already a species that we are highly
24 concerned about in our region due to mountaintop and mineral
25 coal mining. We want to raise the question as to the

1 effectiveness of these mitigation plans and also as to the
2 issue of who will enforce mitigation plans once they are
3 carried out prior to the start of any construction.

4 We request that additional filings from Columbia
5 Pipeline Group be made public and that there be further
6 public input opportunities on the company's additional
7 submissions and on any route changes.

8 We would like to emphasize our request for an
9 extension on this comment period until these important
10 documents and mitigation plans are entered into the public
11 record and available for public review and comment. We
12 request that Columbia be required to provide pre or baseline
13 testing of all wells and ground water sources located in the
14 path of the proposed pipeline route.

15 And we feel that 150 feet is not a sufficient
16 distance to extend this testing. We would like to request
17 that all wells and springs utilized for human consumption be
18 tested within a mile radius of the pipeline. We need to
19 stress again that the location of the Canal River Crossing
20 is problematic for many reasons.

21 One is that the river is very shallow in that
22 area. Another is that there are homes -- churches, gas
23 stations and in one case a local food provider near or
24 adjacent to the route of the pipeline. The existing
25 pipeline that the MXP Project is proposed to connect to in

1 Cabell and Wayne Counties is of indeterminate age and while
2 some segments are being renovated, there is no public
3 information on the condition of the existing line traversing
4 on more densely populated counties.

5 Until the entire length, condition and dimensions
6 of this existing pipeline infrastructure are disclosed to
7 the public, we recommend a denial of the FERC application.
8 The MXP is proposed to cross under a major highway --
9 Interstate 64. I drove past it on my way up here today so I
10 could see the markers.

11 This is a very heavily traveled stretch of
12 interstate. Truck traffic on this highway is often bumper
13 to bumper, includes daily transport of industrial chemicals
14 and petroleum products. Any rupture of a pipeline in this
15 area could have catastrophic consequences.

16 The terminal compressor station for the proposed
17 MXP route is very close to the Tri-State Huntington, West
18 Virginia airport near some suburban residential communities
19 and near the Huntington, West Virginia Veteran's
20 Administration Hospital. The air emissions from this state
21 pose a potential public health hazard of catastrophic
22 proportions.

23 There is no apparent plan for the petroleum
24 resources shipped by this pipeline to be utilized in our
25 state or region. The Columbia MXP appears to be an

1 interstate transport line in that the Gulf Xpress and the
2 Leach Express lines connect into the same system.

3 We believe these pipelines will primarily take
4 our natural resources to export terminals along the coastal
5 areas of the country.

6 In conclusion we believe the potential cost in
7 terms of environmental destruction and endangerment of human
8 life -- human health and life is greater than any potential
9 economic benefit to this state or region.

10 MR. COLE: My name is Alex Cole, A-l-e-x C-o-l-e.
11 I'm a native of Frazier's Bottom, West Virginia where it is
12 crossing the Canal River northwest side of the river there.
13 Just lay into it -- alright. First and foremost I am
14 concerned about the environmental impact of the river
15 crossing and potentially stirring up sediment under the
16 river.

17 Also, all the creeks feeding into Hurricane Creek
18 that it crosses pretty much every creek to the right of
19 Hurricane Creek it crosses also affecting the 5 and 20 Mile
20 Creek -- a lot of family and friends live in the area. One
21 thing I am concerned about as well is I grew up going to the
22 Frazier's Bottom United Methodist Church which I have heard
23 is the oldest wood-sided building in continual use in the
24 state of West Virginia.

25 It was built in 1847. One of the major proposed

1 pipe yards is on three sides of that church right up to it
2 on property that used to be the Alexander Plantation, one of
3 the first large plantation farms in Frazier's Bottom.

4 Those fields used to be full of small Indian
5 mounds as well so I am concerned about archeological impacts
6 potentially from that. Those Indian mounds are a very
7 unique pattern. Of course over the last 150 years they have
8 been tilled under to the point where you can't really tell
9 they were there so most people don't know they were there,
10 but there are still Indian mounds, one in particular in the
11 cemetery of the United Methodist Church.

12 And it is actually the location of the Alexander
13 -- it's the Alexander Cemetery within the church's cemetery
14 and he and his wife are buried on top of that. It is a
15 beautiful location and its pipeline proposed to be a pipe
16 yard to I'm pretty sad.

17 That's the most of it. Like I said primarily I
18 am concerned about environmental impact and sedimentation in
19 our creeks as well as just the impact on the forest, the
20 edge impact and the introduction of invasive species and you
21 know that sort of thing. There is some very steep
22 cliff-type terrain -- especially on Trace Creek and Kilgore
23 Creek through there that I don't think in the long-term
24 there actually is a way to control erosion.

25 Some of the locations that they are going through

1 there will have to be I guess some blasting or chiseling of
2 cliffs and very steep terrain that I don't think you can
3 control erosion or on long-term water quality obviously.
4 But that's a concern too. I guess that's about it.

5 (Pause.)

6 MR. COLE: This is still Alex Cole I just wanted
7 to list particular creeks that I was concerned about,
8 particularly my side of the river every creek that flows
9 into Hurricane Creek, Trace Creek, Coleman Creek, Poindexter
10 Creek, also the left fork of the 5 and 20 Mile Creek and all
11 of its tributaries.

12 The other side of the river, Cob Hollow, Midway
13 Creek and 18 Mile Creek are particular concerns of mine and
14 places that I know personally and appreciate as they are I
15 guess. That's it.

16 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 8:00
17 p.m.)

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17 Date: March 20, 2017

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24 Gaynell Catherine

25 Official Reporter