

Virginia Ripoff Project

What is the VRP?

The Virginia Reliability Project (VRP), what we're calling the Virginia *Ripoff* project, is TC Energy's proposed plan to dig up 49 miles of a 12-inch diameter pipeline running from Hampton Roads to Central Virginia and replace it with a 24-inch pipeline *twice* as wide, quadrupling its capacity to channel dangerous, planet-warming methane gas through our communities. **This is the equivalent of an additional 750,000,000 gallons of methane gas flowing through Virginia every day.**

You may remember **TC Energy is the company responsible for pushing the Keystone XL pipeline**, an environmental justice disaster that indigenous and frontline communities successfully fought off.

Route

The pipeline will pass through the Cities of Chesapeake and Suffolk, as well as Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex Counties. Associated compressor station replacements would affect Petersburg and Emporia.



Environmental impacts

VRP will threaten three fragile and cherished bodies of water: the Nansemond River, the Great Dismal Swamp, and the Chesapeake Bay. This will fragment coastal habitat that native wildlife rely on, and subject waters to herbicides used to kill vegetation along the route.

The Nansemond River is part of [the Western Branch Reservoir](#) (WBR), major source waters for Norfolk, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth. WBR is also a pristine Virginia Fish and Game Area. VRP will also cut through the historic Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, Virginia.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's draft environmental statement plainly states that the project would exacerbate climate change. VRP would increase Virginia's greenhouse emissions by two percent, which is incompatible with the state's statutory target of net-zero emissions by 2045, as well as interim emissions reduction targets.

Health impacts

VRP puts already vulnerable communities at greater risk. By TC Energy's own calculations, **the population along the project route and near compressor stations suffer from significantly higher health risk rates** compared to the state and US averages, including in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, life expectancy, low birth weight, exposure to PM2.5 pollution, and self-reports of poor health. **Thirteen public schools and one hospital are within 1.5 miles or less of the route**, including Hillpoint Elementary in Suffolk, just 300 feet from the pipeline's path.



This raises enormous environmental justice concerns. Within 1 mile of the pipeline's route, more than half the population are communities of color and nearly half the population live below the poverty line.

Corruption

In order to persuade federal regulators that the project is necessary, **TC Energy has been ghostwriting letters of support from key Virginia officials**, including:

- Rick West, **Mayor of Chesapeake**
- Robert Dyer, **Mayor of Virginia Beach**
- Frank Ruff, **Virginia State Senator**
- Tommy Wright Jr, **Virginia Delegate**
- Les Adams, **Virginia Delegate**

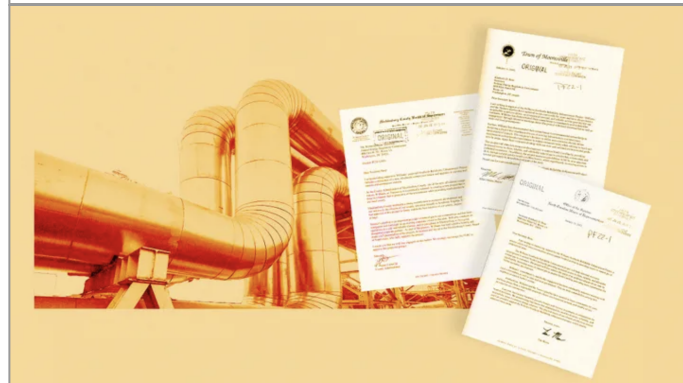
"We appreciate your willingness to draft a letter of support to FERC and I am writing to follow up. We are in the process of submitting letters and I have attached a draft letter for your review," the company wrote to Mayor Dyer.

Gas Giants Have Been Ghostwriting Letters Of Support From Elected Officials

Internal emails show pipeline firms provided North Carolina and Virginia leaders with draft letters and talking points praising their own projects.

By Chris D'Angelo

May. 2, 2022, 05:45 AM EDT



References

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2. Columbia Gas Transmission LLC (2022). "Abbreviated Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and Abandonment Authority, Virginia Reliability Project, Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC under CP22-503." eLibrary, FERC. https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_number=20220824-5073&optimized=false
3. Suffolk Public Schools (2018). "Scenes from Hillpoint 2017-2018," Hillpoint Elementary, <https://blogs.spsk12.net/hes/>.
4. D'Angelo, C (2022, May 2). "Gas Giants Have Been Ghostwriting Letters Of Support From Elected Officials," HuffPost, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/williams-tc-energy-pipeline-projects-influence-virginia-north-carolina_n_6261e382e4b0dc52f494659e