

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 15, 2023

Ms. Kimberly Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

RE: Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate Certificate Expiration, FERC Docket No. CP19-14-000

Dear Secretary Bose,

We write in support of the frontline communities that have voiced their serious concerns about the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) Southgate extension, which would expand this controversial pipeline through Virginia into North Carolina. On June 26, 2023, Representatives Foushee and Manning—who represent the North Carolina congressional districts in which the Southgate extension would be constructed—wrote to Chairman Phillips expressing concerns about the short comment period and urging the Commission to deny an extension of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

On June 29, 2023, Representative McClellan, whose district borders the most impacted district in Virginia, sent a letter echoing concerns about the length of the public comment period and affected communities' ability to voice their concerns about this project. Following these requests, we appreciated the Commission's decision to extend the deadline for comments, allowing for additional input. Comments included a letter sent by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper on July 24, 2023, urging the Commission to deny an extension of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

As Members of Congress committed to addressing the climate crisis, we echo these requests and urge the Commission to deny an extension of the Certificate for MVP Southgate. If built, this pipeline would lock homes and businesses in the Southeast into the long-term use of natural gas during a critical moment in which we must transition away from fossil fuels to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

The primary component of natural gas is methane, a fossil fuel responsible for up to 30 percent of global warming.¹ Burning methane releases carbon dioxide, and methane is itself a potent greenhouse gas when it leaks into the atmosphere from pipelines, compressor stations, and other gas infrastructure. Moreover, combusting methane inside a home for cooking and heating creates harmful indoor air pollution. A recent study attributed 12.7 percent of childhood asthma in the United States to indoor gas use, and these risks are often greatest for communities of color and low-wealth communities.²

¹ NASA. (2023, June 20). *Vital Signs: Methane*. Global Climate Change. <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/methane/>

² *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 Jan; 20(1): 75. Published online 2022 Dec 21. doi: [10.3390/ijerph20010075](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010075)

Thanks to the introduction of energy-efficiency appliances and lighting and new building codes, North Carolina reduced its residential sector emissions by a quarter between 2005 and 2018, a time in which the population grew nearly 20 percent.³ Despite this progress, the Southgate extension was proposed in the spring of 2018. The only company that had signed a shipper agreement for the MVP Southgate project at that time was the Public Service Company of North Carolina, a gas distribution utility that primarily supplies gas to residential and commercial customers. In the five years since the Southgate extension was proposed, the energy landscape has continued to evolve, further diminishing the need for additional gas for residential purposes. Clean energy generation continues to grow, and home electrification has become more accessible through the passage of federal climate and clean energy legislation.

In 2022, Congress passed and President Biden signed the landmark Inflation Reduction Act (Public Law No: 117-169) to fight climate change and advance environmental justice. This law makes billions of federal dollars available for residential and commercial alternatives to natural gas use, including \$8.8 billion for home energy rebates for low-wealth households to switch to electric appliances and to make homes more efficient. At a larger scale, states, local governments, and Tribes recently submitted applications to the Environmental Protection Agency for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program “to develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution.” This \$5 billion program is available for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benefit low-wealth and underserved communities.

In 2019, North Carolina’s Clean Energy Plan recognized that regulators would need to “consider the rapidly changing market dynamics that could lead to stranded natural gas assets” as well as “the best means to assure grid reliability and electricity affordability for ratepayers” when making decisions about additional natural gas infrastructure moving forward.⁴ Granting an extension to the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, despite the overwhelming evidence of North Carolina’s clean energy transition, would not only risk burdening North Carolinians with undue costs of a stranded asset but also contribute to a future defined by more frequent and severe hurricanes and other climate-fueled storms.

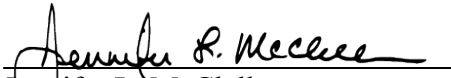
Congress recognizes and has acted upon the moral imperative of reducing emissions. Given this changed landscape, the Commission should not rely on its previous and now outdated determination that there is a market need for this pipeline. We urge the Commission to deny an extension of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the MVP Southgate project.

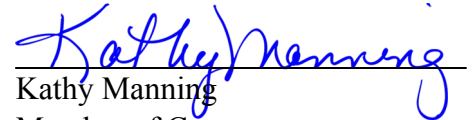
Thank you for the opportunity to bring these concerns to your attention.


Sincerely,


³ North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. (2019, Oct). *North Carolina Clean Energy Plan*. <https://www.deq.nc.gov/air-quality/ghg-inventory-report-2022/download?attachment>

⁴ North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. (2022, Jan). *North Carolina Greenhouse Gas Inventory (1990-2030)*. https://files.nc.gov/ncdeq/climate-change/clean-energy-plan/NC_Clean_Energy_Plan_OCT_2019_.pdf


Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress

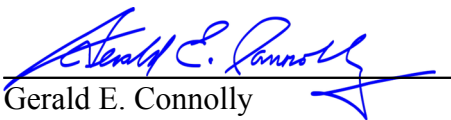

Kathy Manning
Member of Congress

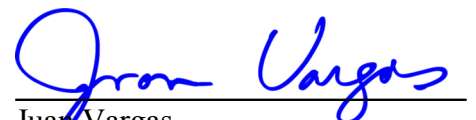

Valerie P. Foushee
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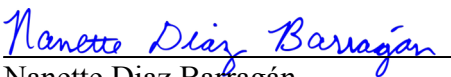

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Jared Huffman
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Juan Vargas
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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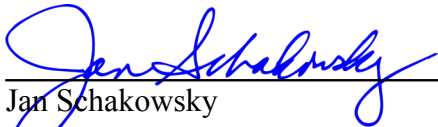

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Yvette D. Clarke
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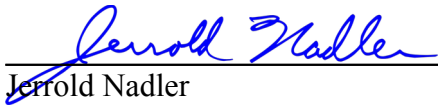
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Adriano Espaillat
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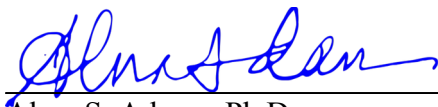
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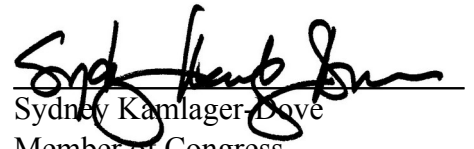
Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia
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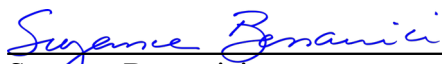
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Ro Khanna
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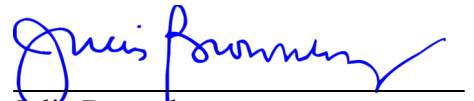
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