

Who's Going to Pay for the ACP? A Misguided, Dangerous and Costly Boondoggle for Eastern North Carolina

The ACP has only gotten as far as it has with federal and state agencies because the builders of the pipeline have invested massive resources in a PR campaign to win over local governments and state agencies. It's important to realize that if this massive pipeline gets its final approvals, it will only be due to a failure of agencies to assess the actual need for the pipeline, as well the environmental and social damage it is likely to cause.

The disinformation campaign by Dominion and Duke has included unsubstantiated claims of the growing need for natural gas and gas-fired electricity, when the actual growth in demand in recent years and project future is almost flat. When Dominion recently admitted that it has always planned to extend the ACP into South Carolina, what many of us had suspected became very clear—not only do the utilities building the pipeline expect to profit handsomely from simply building the pipeline (FERC has offered up to a 14% profit), but they will be able to make even more profits by compressing and exporting the gas from SC ports to markets willing to pay much higher prices for natural gas: South American and Asia, in particular. It was NEVER the intention for VA and NC to be the primary recipients of the gas.. The utilities pitched their need for new natural gas plants, on which they would make even more profits, as the excuse for bringing the gas to our state. Now Duke and Dominion admit that they won't need all of those plants after all.

It's never been the Duke and Dominion shareholder who would take any financial risk for building the pipeline. Instead, the public was largely in the dark, but the plan has always been for the construction to be financed by rate hikes for utility customers. In other words, we would pay for the construction and profit margin, even if the pipeline is never fully used!

Finally, the ACP would be a huge monument to planned Environmental Injustice, perhaps the largest in the history of the Southeast US. Of the eight counties the ACP would cross from Northampton to Robeson, only ONE doesn't have a significantly higher population of low income residents and residents of color. And in many cases, the injustice gets worse, the closer you are to the pipeline. And those populations would also face higher risks due to potential leaks, fires and explosions, as far as 1,000 feet out from the pipeline. Further, those populations will see almost no economic benefit, as the cost for new industries to hook up to the ACP will be too high to attract them to low income, rural communities.

The ACP is just plain wrong—unnecessary, costly for a public that will not benefit from it, dangerous, and perpetuating a history of environmental injustices to poor communities of color, especially in the South.