

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 9, 2020

The Honorable Neil Chatterjee
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Chatterjee:

We write concerning the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) public notice regarding the Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC; Notice of Request for Extension of Time (Docket No. CP16-10-000, issued September 2, 2020). Specifically, we ask that you extend the intervention and public comment period deadline from 15 calendar days to 30 calendar days.

As you know, on August 25, 2020, Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP) requested a two year extension to complete the pipeline by October 2022 due to litigation and permitting delays that have surfaced since FERC issued a certificate of public convenience and necessity to MVP on October 13, 2017. Some of these permitting issues led to FERC issuing a stop work order on MVP in October 2019. Given the years long and wide-ranging issues with permitting and legal challenges to MVP, we find that a 15 day comment period is inadequate to meet the complexity and circumstances of the matter at hand.

We have heard from countless Virginians who are facing unprecedented, often dire challenges in response to the coronavirus pandemic. While there are undoubtedly a number of individuals who are interested in submitting comments for the record, there are also many families that are balancing deeply serious priorities such as employment searches, plans for a child's new school year, visits to the local food pantry, or medical care for sick loved ones. Further, many of the communities in the path of the MVP are in Southwest Virginia, an area that faces significant challenges with broadband connectivity, and will have difficulty submitting comments electronically. We are also witnessing widespread reports of delays in postal service in the event that comments are submitted by mail. An extended comment period is a modest change that will ease the burden on some Virginians to take the necessary steps to submit thoughtful input to the Commission.

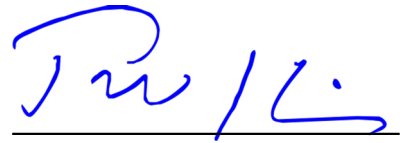
We are thankful that FERC has opened this comment period under your leadership. We are also pleased to hear of some of the reforms you have recently called for to bolster landowner rights in the FERC rehearing process, to give the Commission ample time to review and act on the concerns of property owners. It is our view that a simple extension of this comment period is in the same spirit of ensuring property rights are respected in eminent domain proceedings.

An extension of the MVP intervention and public comment period deadline will provide small but meaningful relief for Virginians in the midst of unprecedented challenges at home. It will also bring additional transparency to the process by which FERC certifies natural gas pipelines. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Mark Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator