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14 August 2017

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Office of the Secretary

AUG 21 2017

Department of Environmental Quality

The Honorable Michael Regan, Secretary  
NC Department of Environmental Quality  
217 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Re: Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Dear Secretary Regan,

I write to comment on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP). After much evaluation and discussion, the NCEast Alliance Board of Directors passed a resolution in support of this project because it will bring improved prosperity to eastern North Carolina. The Alliance is a public/private, not-for-profit, regional economic development organization serving 28 counties in eastern NC. Our primary purpose is to promote investment and job creation in our region as well as to identify and remedy issues that inhibit growth in this part of the state. We accomplish this by: 1) advocating for regional interests and institutions; 2) supporting entrepreneurship and marketing the attractiveness of the region on an international scale; and 3) facilitating workforce development and STEM education in partnership with many different entities.

Unfortunately, there is a good deal of misinformation about the ACP being circulated by various parties opposed to the pipeline. First, we believe clean energy is good for NC— supporting deployment of solar and wind energy facilities is an excellent rural development strategy. However, we also know gas-fired power plants can respond more quickly to power shortages when wind and energy sources are not producing – for example, instances of windless days or extended periods of cloudy days that reduces or shuts down solar energy production.

While methane gas venting and burn-off does contribute to global warming, these will be nearly non-existent in North Carolina and the dangers of explosions in transmission lines are miniscule. Pipeline transmission of natural gas is one of the safest and lowest emission ways to transport energy. The vast majority of gas leaks/venting takes place at the point of exploration and the other primary sources of methane gas are agriculture, wetlands and thawing of permafrost. Furthermore, gas line explosions are much more likely in aging distribution systems. Additionally, the air of eastern NC is cleaner as a result of Duke Energy's conversion of the Lee coal-fired plant to natural gas. We no longer suffer from higher levels of CO<sub>2</sub> or particulate that harm people suffering from asthma. The elimination of the coal-fired

plant will allow our region to remain an attainment area under EPA guidelines; this will permit our existing manufacturers to expand and facilitate the location of new manufacturing facilities here.

Even though the Marcellus Shale gas is finite, these gas fields are expected to produce for 100+ years, providing eastern NC with a long-term supply of relatively clean and inexpensive energy to support our growth. This is why both Duke and Dominion power companies are willing to invest billions to construct this pipeline. We also know the ACP can boost the amount of natural gas flowing through the pipeline to support additional industrial development by simply increasing the size of the pumps.

We recognize jobs associated with construction of the ACP are temporary, just the same as jobs tied to the installation of solar and wind farms, but the ACP will also have a long-lasting impact on job creation in our region. Natural gas is a key input in manufacturing - food processing, bio-pharmaceuticals, specialty chemicals (including fertilizer), and motor-vehicle assembly plants that use ovens to cure paints applied to metal parts. These industries are critical job producers in eastern NC and we need jobs for everyone - we believe good job opportunities for our people is social justice too! Personally, I have spent a lifetime trying to build a better eastern NC and can personally attest that our region has lost industrial projects because we were at the end of the pipeline without sufficient natural gas (and pressure) to support the expansion and/or attraction of manufacturers. This piece of infrastructure, along with newly designated Interstate highways to our ports and an intermodal rail hub in Rocky Mount, mean increased opportunity for our region, its communities, and its people. The ACP will help us secure more investment that will increase job creation and reduce poverty in eastern NC. These are a few of the reasons why the NCEast Alliance is on record supporting the ACP and has made its position public many times over the course of the last year.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinion on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project. We acknowledge it is important for the Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that all measures possible must be taken to insure the health and safety of our residents, but is important to recognize the multiple benefits of this project as well. Please approve all permits necessary to allow the construction of the ACP and enable eastern North Carolina to prosper.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Chaffee".

John D. Chaffee  
President & CEO

Copies: Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor of North Carolina  
Honorable Tony Copeland, Secretary, NC Department of Commerce  
Ms. Mary Penny Kelly, Sr. Advisor, Policy and Analysis, NC Department of Environmental Quality  
NCEast Alliance Board of Directors