



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Lieutenant Governor

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Mr. David K. Paylor
Director, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 1105
Richmond, Virginia 23218

February 14, 2017

Dear Mr. Paylor,

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is currently reviewing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permits (NWP), which apply to work in streams, wetlands, and other waters of the United States and which will go into effect on March 19, 2017.

I request that DEQ makes clear to the public that the review, and any subsequent certification of the NWP, is independent and distinct with regards to future decisions DEQ may make regarding individual permit applications. I am specifically concerned about the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipeline projects; these projects should be held to the highest environmental standards. The public could perceive DEQ's certification of the NWP as a signal that these two pipeline projects will not be reviewed under an individual permit, and therefore not held to the highest standards.

Once the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley water quality permit applications are complete, I recommend that DEQ strongly consider utilizing individual permits. These projects must undergo a thorough evaluation of their impacts on our natural resources. Such a decision will provide an individualized analysis for each project that will increase public input and transparency.

While I recognize that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is responsible for determining whether the pipeline projects will move forward and where they will be routed, I also recognize that DEQ has an important role to play in safeguarding Virginia's water resources.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph S. Northam'.

Ralph Northam