

How to comment on proposed 401 Water Quality Certifications for the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines

Important dates

The public comment period ends at 11:59 p.m. on August 22, 2017.

- Public hearings on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline are:
 - August 7, 2017, -- James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA
 - August 10, 2017, Longwood University, Farmville, VA
 - August 14, 2017,-- Southside Virginia Community College, Alberta, VA
- Public hearings on the Mountain Valley Pipeline are:
 - August 8, 2017, Radford University, Radford, VA
 - August 9, 2017, Chatham High School, Chatham, VA

Additional pipeline-related information is available at bit.do/DEQpipelines.

You have the right to provide public comments on the proposed Section 401 Water Quality Certifications for construction-related activities in upland areas that are located near state waters and that may affect state water along the proposed routes of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). You may provide your comments by submitting written comments during the official public comment period, or by speaking at the public hearings. Public comments relevant to the draft additional conditions help ensure that concerns are addressed and decisions are made in accordance with the law and regulations.

The following answers to frequently asked questions are provided to help ensure your comments are received and noted.

What is the subject of the public comment period?

DEQ is seeking comments on the proposed conditions described in the draft certificates. Only comments related to the MVP or ACP additional conditions will be considered. Additional conditions address karst protection, unregulated surface water withdrawal, exceptional waters, water quality monitoring and activity on steep slopes and in slide-prone areas to protect areas during and after construction activities. These conditions provide additional protections not already addressed by other regulations or requirements. For more information on the permitting and review process, see the presentation to State Water Control Board on July 19, 2017 at bit.do/DEQpipelines.

When is the public comment period?

Comments will be accepted through 11:59 p.m. on August 22, 2017. The comment period is 50 days, 20 days longer than required by the State Water Control Board's Procedural Rule No. 1 (9VAC25-230-130B). It also is important to note that DEQ has directed ACP and MVP to post their site-specific plans for erosion and sediment control and stormwater management so the public can have an opportunity to review them. That deadline is October 13, 2017.

How do I submit a comment?

Comments are given the same consideration by the board whether they are made in writing or given orally.

- Hand-deliver your comments to DEQ, Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection, 629 East Main St., Richmond, VA 23219 during business hours 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Mail your comments to DEQ, Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, VA 23218.
- Email your comments. For the ACP, the email address is comment-acp@deq.virginia.gov. For MVP, the email address is comment-mvp@deq.virginia.gov.
- Make an oral comment or submit written comments at one of the scheduled public hearings.

What is required for a public comment to be considered?

- Comments must be submitted before the end of the comment period by the 11:59 p.m., August 22, 2017 deadline.
- Comments should be factual and related to the merits or issues contained in the proposed certification document.
- When providing written comments, the person commenting must include his/her name and mailing address, and if representing a group of people, the person commenting must also include the names, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers of the persons being represented (such as an organization's members).
- Persons wishing to make oral comments at one of the five hearings will need to sign in at the registration desk, where they will receive a speaker number. An allotment of 3 minutes is typical for each speaker, but the time allowed will be determined by the hearing officer at the start of each hearing based on the number of people registered to make oral comments.

What happens after the public comment period?

- DEQ staff will summarize all public oral and written comments received during the public comment period, and will provide this summary and responses to comments to the State Water Control Board before its Fall meeting.
- Only persons who have submitted written or oral comments during the public comment period may respond to the public comment summary provided to the State Water Control Board in accordance with the Board's Policy on Public Comment at State Water Control Board Meetings. **Note:** No new information or comments may be made at that meeting. The board's comment policy is available at bit.do/SWCBcomments. Consideration of the draft 401 Water Quality Certifications for the pipelines falls under the category of case decision.
- The State Water Control Board may grant as proposed, grant with amendments, or deny the proposed 401 certification.
- DEQ will publish additional information as it becomes available, and will send email updates through its news feeds.

More information

Pipelines page:

bit.do/DEQpipelines

Erosion and Sediment Control plans for pipelines:

bit.do/DEQESCpipelines

Water Board comments policy:

bit.do/SWCBcomments

Tips on Making Effective Public Comments:

bit.do/effectivecomments

DEQ calendar:

bit.do/DEQcalendar

News feeds:

bit.do/DEQcast

401 guidance memo:

bit.do/401guidance

VA law portal:

law.lis.virginia.gov/

VA regulatory Town Hall:

townhall.virginia.gov