



**Virginia Interfaith Power & Light**  
1716 East Franklin St.  
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April 4, 2018

Dear Governor Ralph Northam,

The Rev. Dr. King said that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere—we cannot remain silent while our neighbors' property is unjustly seized for private gain, drinking water vital for all life is endangered, many of our most vital natural areas are slated for destruction, and while people of color and low-income communities bear the brunt of this assault.

It is fitting that on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., that we, the undersigned faith leaders from across the commonwealth, raise a clarion call to environmental justice and sacredness of life. We are writing to inform you of our strong opposition to the impending construction of the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast Pipelines.

At a time when global climate change is accelerating even more rapidly than predicted, and the lack of availability of clean water is becoming a crisis in communities across the United States, committing to a long-term investment in fossil fuel infrastructure that exacerbates both problems is not only immoral, but also unwise and threatens the health of Virginians.

The costs of climate change, pollution, and commonly occurring pipeline leaks and breaks are felt by all Virginians. But, their direct social and economic costs are health impacts to air, water, and land, loss of land values and rights, forced most often upon communities of color and low-income rural communities with the least political power and histories of discrimination. The proposed Atlantic Coast (ACP) and Mountain Valley Pipelines routes continue this trend of environmental injustice, as evidenced by the decision to site the only ACP Virginia compressor station on former slave plantation lands surrounded on all sides by the populous, 85% African American, historic Freedmen community of Union Hill in Buckingham, Virginia.

In addition to these costly consequences, we are disturbed by the anti-democratic process by which these unnecessary pipelines were approved. We regret that many politicians have chosen a path of climate science denial and obstructionism, and make backroom deals with powerful fossil fuel companies even as their destructive effects are already being felt by Virginians every day—we do not believe you are one of those politicians.

There is another path forward for Virginia: we can invest in pollution-free, renewable infrastructure that will create new jobs, support our energy independence, and protect



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our land and all of our citizens for generations to come. We can sustain landowners with monthly solar lease compensation rather than eminent domain condemnations for pipelines that can destroy current agricultural uses, for a forced one-time easement payment. Join other leaders to build a legacy of clean energy and dignity of life, instead of committing Virginia to an unnecessary, dangerous, and polluting infrastructure. We urge you to do the right thing and reject the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines.

Sincerely,

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