

# Our Air, Our Lives: Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham County Report

August 16, 2018



Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham, a group of Virginia-based clergy and faith leaders, with Union Hill and Buckingham residents

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## Acknowledgments

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Sincerest thanks to the advocates across the state, nation, and globe speaking up for the land, the trees, the water, and the people being negatively impacted by fossil fuel infrastructure. We also acknowledge our Creator who, from boundless imagination and love, stitched together this beautiful world we are blessed to inhabit and share with each other.



Pictured above left to right: Pastor Paul Wilson of Union Hill and Union Grove Church, Rev. Dr. Faith Harris, Chair of Virginia Interfaith Power & Light, and Robert Dilday, Co-Director of Interfaith Alliance for Climate Justice

## About Virginia Interfaith Power & Light

We are people of faith collaborating to grow healthy communities and advance climate justice through education, advocacy, and worship. For more information, visit [vaipl.org](http://vaipl.org).

## Executive Summary

On July 26, the **Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham County**, a group of Virginia-based clergy and faith leaders, traveled to Union Grove Baptist Church in Union Hill, a predominantly African American community in Buckingham, Virginia, to hear resident testimony and to gather information from local experts about the impacts of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline's 54,000+ horsepower compressor station proposed for the community. Spiritual traditions represented included Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Wicca. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is being developed by Dominion Energy, Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas, and Southern Company Gas with Dominion Energy driving the construction and operation of the pipeline and compressor station.

Clergy toured the area that will be directly impacted by the construction and operation of the ACP compressor station, finding the safety concerns and potential pollution risks to the land, air, and water to be unacceptable. Based on the testimonies, scientific findings, and tour, clergy persons were able to reach consensus on recommended actions.

They recommended that decision-makers across the state, such as Governor Ralph Northam, acknowledge the pain felt by residents caused by this unnecessary fossil fuel infrastructure and take immediate steps to delay construction until the concerns of the residents are adequately addressed.

The delegation recommended that people of faith across the state also take urgent action, such as participating in the public comment period open through [September 11 for the air permit for the compressor station](#). They called on interfaith prayer and meditation for the strength and renewal of the residents of Buckingham and those across Virginia impacted by the ACP and Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP).

Additionally, they decided to circulate a clergy sign-on letter to be sent to the governor, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and members of the state Air Pollution Control Board to encourage them to understand the moral obligation to care for fellow Virginians, regardless of income or race.

A commitment was also made among the delegates to continue to build a public-facing network of faith leaders across the state that are interested in taking action to stop the compressor station, the ACP and MVP, and the negative health and justice consequences of fossil fuel infrastructure.

## Foreword

As people driven by faith to uphold a vision of the intrinsic worth of Creation, shared abundance, neighborly love, and the sanctity of life, we at VA IPL condemn the decision to site the ACP compressor station in Virginia on former plantation lands. It's absolutely counter to these values to site this source of pollution on land surrounded on all sides by the populous, 85% African American, historic community founded by the formerly enslaved people of Union Hill in Buckingham County.

In a world guided by private interests, complex systems of power, and shoddy standards of political leadership, it is easy for those in power to further paradigms that are corrupt, false and destructive. It can be easy for the public to accept these aggressively promoted paradigms as logical, or even desirable, especially in the absence of an alternative narrative. It is the role of people of faith to both shine a light on what is corrupt, false and destructive, and to lift up an alternative paradigm, handed down through millennia across many different faith and wisdom traditions. This common paradigm is one that honors all life, that holds loving your neighbor paramount, and that envisions abundance, health, and dignity for all members of the human community and the ecosystems on which humans depend. That means, at a minimum, clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, and a healthy environment that supports life.

Decisionmakers expect us to look the other way when the government seizes private property for corporate profits—to halve our neighbors' property values, clear-cut their old-growth forests, place them in the direct path of blast zones they will not be able to escape, shove a 42-inch fracked gas pipeline through their fields and streams, and wreck their dreams for their families and their livelihoods. They expect us to ignore our neighbors' suffering, to turn a blind eye to all that they will lose. In short, they expect us to abandon the divine call to love our neighbors. But we will not do that. We love our neighbors, and we will stand with them and amplify their voices and stories. A business plan that relies upon the seizure and destruction of our neighbors' land is unacceptable—Dominion and its corporate partners must find a new business model. And any government that supports these unethical, extreme, and unjust actions is in need of deep reform as well.

We refuse to forfeit our health and safety so that a private company can profit. People—and especially children—cannot thrive without clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. These pipelines are crisscrossing hundreds of rivers and streams when there have been well over 4,000 fracked pipelines incidents in the U.S. since 2010, a rate of almost 1.5 per day. The compressor station for the ACP, planned for the Union Hill community of Buckingham County, will likely clog the air with toxic emissions including methane, nitrous oxides, and particulate matter. Polluted air and water always impede the flourishing of life, and in the case of these pipelines, the threats are severe. We cannot accept this harm—as people of faith we are called to uphold and defend life as sacred.

Our society expects us to simply accept ongoing environmental racism and injustice denying the most basic of human rights because of a lack of alternative paradigms—they are wrong. As people of faith, we are here to say there is an alternative, based on cooperation and mutual respect between neighbors, rather than alienation and grasping acquisition. This alternative is rooted in a great love for all that lives. We humans are ingenious creatures, and when motivated by love we can find solutions that heal rather than harm, create rather than destroy, and which increase health and abundance while addressing our pressing economic needs including affordable energy production and job creation. Solar and wind, distributed energy generation, freestanding microgrids, electrified public transportation, smart urban planning, green infrastructure investment, and biomimetic technologies are just some of these solutions, and they are already available.

We are and will remain committed to a future worthy of the next generation: one that harnesses ecological wisdom and neighborly love for a just and healthy Virginia.

— VAIPL Steering Committee

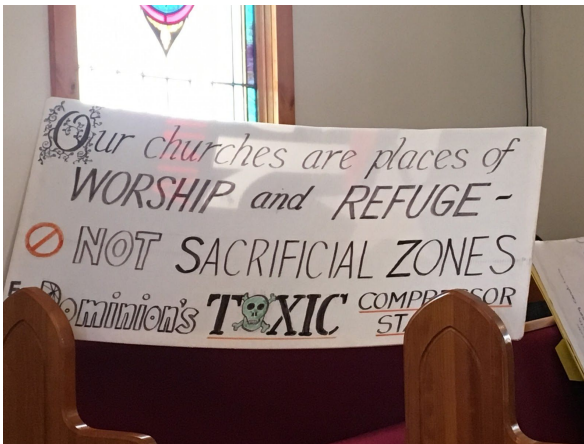
## Background

The proposed ACP is a 600-mile pipeline that would cut through West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina, carrying fracked-gas. This pipeline will contribute to the problem of climate disruption, and is a grave threat to the land, water, health, and safety of those living along the proposed route.<sup>1</sup>



A recent analysis of the ACP's estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by Oil Change International and BOLD Alliance shows that the pipeline could have devastating impacts on the climate. The ACP would be responsible for nearly 68 million metric tons of climate pollution annually, equivalent to 20 coal plants or 14 million vehicles.

ACP has applied to build one of the largest compressor stations in the US in the 85% African American community of Union Hill in Buckingham, Virginia. Many are calling this decision environmental racism, defined by the Energy Justice Network as "the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on people of color." The proposed compressor station site is surrounded, from as close as 150 feet away, by land owned in the majority by descendants of formerly enslaved people. Union Hill is a historic freedmen's community.



Compressor stations use gas-fired turbines to keep the methane gas in the pipelines pressurized and moving. Running 24 hours a day, compressor stations cause constant noise and emit a varying level of toxic emissions based on pressure changes and maintenance-related deliberate releases of pollution, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, leaking and accidentally venting methane – a powerful greenhouse gas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BOLD Alliance, & Oil Change International. Atlantic Coast Pipeline Climate Fact Sheet[PDF]. [http://www.ncwarn.org/wp-content/uploads/ACP-Fact-Sheet-FINAL\\_Oil-Change-Intl\\_Bold-Alliance.pdf](http://www.ncwarn.org/wp-content/uploads/ACP-Fact-Sheet-FINAL_Oil-Change-Intl_Bold-Alliance.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Concerned Health Professionals of New York, & Physicians for Social Responsibility. (2018, March). Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction)[PDF]. [https://www.psr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Fracking\\_Science\\_Compendium\\_5.pdf](https://www.psr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Fracking_Science_Compendium_5.pdf)

## Resident Testimonies

While many residents of Buckingham County attended the **Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham County**, a few shared their personal stories and the current and expected impacts of the pipeline on their lives with the clergy and faith leaders who were gathered from across the state.

**Ruby Laury** (pictured right, standing) moved from California to Union Hill in Buckingham County with her husband, John W. Laury, for the “clean air, clean water, green land, and no stress.” The Laurys are farmers and ranchers who depend on healthy land. Mrs. Laury has great concern for the impact that the pipeline, and its underground connections to existing pipelines, will have on water, including her drinking water. She talked about the impact the compressor station will have on ranchers, milk farmers, property values, and air quality. She lamented that she would no longer be able to go outside and sit on the front porch to look at the moon and the stars because of the unsafe pollution released by the compressor station, which is proposed site is nearby.



Mrs. Laury also pointed to environmental racism as a reason for Dominion and the ACP's choice to put the compressor station in Union Hill. “America was built on the backs of black people and other ethnic groups. Now it's Dominion, ACP, FERC,” she said. “Build it in the black community. They don't matter. They don't care.”



The folks in Buckingham do care, however. Mrs. Laury recalled a conversation with her granddaughter, where she said: “They're calling me an activist. I don't think I'm an activist.” Her granddaughter responded, “yes, you are.”

**John W. Laury** (pictured left, standing), a farmer who retired to Buckingham, said, “My plan was to raise some cattle, relax...but that wasn't God's plan.” Mr. Laury said that God knows there's work to be done, and the

community has a destiny while here. Pointing to the banner above the church altar, he read, “Stand up for what is right, even if you’re standing alone.”

Mr. Laury said that in this struggle with the pipeline and compressor station, he’s found that people are too wrapped up in the things of this world, that people forget where they come from and that people are only here for a little while. He said the proposed compressor station is genocide and “injustice is forced on people and corporate America thinks they don’t have the resources to fight.”

He called on everyone in attendance to stand up and depend on God. He said, “By the grace of God, we will continue to resist, at all costs, this proposed compressor station.”

**Ella Rose**, one of the residents living closest to the proposed site of the compressor station, confessed that she has been a nervous wreck ever since the announcement of the siting of the compressor station in their community. Ms. Rose moved from Nelson County six years ago to a peaceful property surrounded by pine forests and open land. She wants to enjoy it, but now she’ll be 150 feet from the property line of the compressor station.

Rose (pictured right) emphasized that despite all of the comments submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the meetings organized by Friends of Buckingham with decision makers, Union Hill is not being heard. Even the local Board of Supervisors approved the Special Use Permit (SUP), despite the majority of the community speaking out against it.



Rose is worried about the constant noise of the compressor station, as well as the impact it will have on wildlife. She worries about her quality of life, tree loss, toxic air pollution, well water contamination, and potential explosions. She fears that everything that is of value to her will be threatened.

Like the Laurys, Rose also pointed to environmental racism. “I believe now that this community was chosen because we are predominantly African American,” she said. “They assume we won’t speak up.” She concluded by asserting that the lives of Union Hill matter too, and they should not be sacrificed for financial gain.

## Panel Presentations

**Chad Oba** (pictured below, far left), also a resident of Union Hill, has been deeply involved in monitoring the regulatory process and gave an account of the community's experience.

After an initial positive presentation by Dominion in the Buckingham Village at the beginning of the campaign, the community began to do research on other compressor stations and reached out to experts. They found that compressor stations are sources of pollution. Since the land sold to Dominion was zoned for agriculture, they needed to acquire a SUP. At the SUP hearing, the majority of the community spoke out against it, but it still passed. The residents of Buckingham learned early on that they were going to be ignored.



Community members also gave testimony to the FERC, who approves interstate infrastructure, but according to Oba, minutes from the hearings showed garbled and missing testimony.

Oba said that Dr. Lakshmi Fjord, a scholar in anthropology, submitted reams of sociological impacts, because no one was assessing the environmental, cultural, and community impacts of the project. According to Oba, all Dr. Fjord received in return was a short paragraph and a half about these impacts in the voluminous Environmental Impact Statement.

In May of this year, the information from the October 2017 Charlottesville People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Environmental Justice Impacts of the ACP and MVP presented evidence of human rights violations by these fracked-gas pipelines at the historic Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Session on Human Rights, Fracking, and Climate Change. The judges from the Charlottesville People's Tribunal recommended "that the states of West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina, along with all environmental agencies, should (1) Suspend all actions, (2) Undertake necessary, thorough investigations, such as environmental, cultural and health impacts assessments, with real voice and real vote from the community, (3) Immediately Cease and Desist eminent domain actions." [Read the full conclusion from the Tribunal.](#)

**Kenda Hanuman**, co-founder of Friends of Buckingham, shared about the major changes Dominion made to the compressor station in order to meet the DEQ's air permit requirements.

Dominion submitted over 100 pages of updates in the last few months, which has taken citizens a lot of time to weed through.



According to Hanuman (pictured left, second from right), Dominion reported that they would use catalytic reduction to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals that will be produced from the station, pollutants such as nitrogen oxide, VOCs, sulfur dioxide, and methane. These types of dangerous chemicals produce all sorts of health risks, including nosebleeds, headaches, birth defects. Hanuman said, using expert estimates of a two to seven percent constant methane leakage, the

community predicts the compressor station will release 221.3 million tons of toxins per year. According to her, Dominion has not done any modeling to see how far these toxins will reach. Based on the research and modeling of Friends of Buckingham, these toxic chemicals can reach as far as ten to 15 miles, which would impact more than Union Hill; it would also include the Yogaville community and the Buckingham County Courthouse.

According to Hanuman, the amount of aqueous ammonia storage needed almost doubled from Dominion's original application. Aqueous ammonia is a toxic chemical, damaging to the respiratory system and the eyes. Hanuman's concern is that storage tanks leak, a fear amplified by the fact that Buckingham is located on a fault zone making the area prone to earthquakes.

Hanuman emphasized that the compressor station's giant turbines will produce 54,000+ horsepower and that Dominion seems to be trying to increase horsepower output further.

Hanuman also shared areas of past and future collaboration:

- Physicians for Social Responsibility helped identify health impacts
- Environmental Defense Fund is helping to develop a "Community Bill of Rights"
- The DEQ will have a public comment period and hearing for the compressor station's air pollution permit

**Jeeva Abbate**, Director of Yogaville Environmental Solutions and a yogi, gave a presentation called "Baptists, Yogis, & Community Unite Against the ACP" covering the dangers of the pipeline.

Before he began his presentation, Abbate said he wants to expose “the 800 lb gorilla in the room,” that the pipeline and compressor station is not needed. He emphasized that eminent domain is only for the common, domestic good, and that this pipeline is for profit, not the common good.

Abbate (pictured center right, gesturing) said this \$6 billion project is profitable for Dominion, because the cost is backed on its ratepayers. He said that Dominion reasons that their own subsidiaries are asking for gas, but these customers are already receiving gas from Transco, an underutilized pipeline, and the reality is that the demand for energy is predicted to be flat through 2040.



Abbate shared a number of dangers, including:

- Water impacts: horizontal drilling under the James River and construction could pollute surface water and the aquifer used for well-water if drilled into (A chemical lubricant used for drilling commonly pollutes water sources.)
- Toxic fumes
- Natural gas explosion and fires

Abbate said that Dominion continues to avoid addressing the safety issues as they haven't provided an evacuation plan and haven't mapped a danger zone. Buckingham, a rural area in a seismic zone, has a dangerously long emergency response time of 20-30 minutes already, according to Abbate.

He cited that every year there are dozens of serious incidents reported in the U.S., including fatalities, injuries, and property damage, because of compressor stations. For example, in Sissonville, WV, a gas pipeline ruptured and resulted in a highway catching on fire; Abbate said the ACP is a smaller pipeline at higher compression than the one in Sissonville, making it even more dangerous.

**Heidi Berthoud**, Secretary of Friends of Buckingham, a Wiccan priestess and yogini, shared about the Friends of Buckingham's water and air quality impact studies. Berthoud said baseline testing of surface and well water, air and health are being done by citizens because it's not being done by Dominion, ACP, or the DEQ. Recommendations to do air and water impact studies along the entire pipeline route were scaled back in December 2016.

There will be water testing at 30 sites along the pipeline route. With training and tools from Appalachian Voices and Trout United, citizens will be able to monitor the 36 streams that the ACP will cross in Buckingham County. In addition to water testing, citizens are monitoring eight households for particulate matter (PM).

Berthoud also shared that a Public Health Department in Madison, NY, is doing a comprehensive impact analysis on a 12,000 horsepower compressor station, and suggested that the Virginia Department of Health participate in similar monitoring efforts.

**Robert Dilday** (pictured far right), Co-Director of Interfaith Alliance for Climate Justice and student at Virginia Theological Seminary preparing for the priesthood in the Episcopal Church, spoke on the faith communities role in social justice and activism. He said faith communities advocate for justice, upset the normal order of things, and challenge



immoral norms. He shared that often when large corporations currently endangering health and life are held accountable by justice work, they turn to the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act to convict justice advocates of organized crime because of financial support for “illegal activity.” But ultimately, he said, all of our faith traditions remind us to not live in fear, to not back down. People advocating peacefully for the sanctity of life should not be labeled as “ecoterrorists.”

## Impacted Area Tour

The tour was guided by Chad Oba, one of the panelists. Below, the “stops” of the tour are in bold.

On the tour, there weren't cobblestone streets or historical buildings, because the history of this community is underground. The above ground cemetery at **Union Grove Baptist Church** is antebellum, and the graves were mostly unmarked pre-Civil War. Some gravesites are just depressions in the ground with rocks over them.

Next was the **Laurys' home and Laury Lane**. The Laurys, who had shared their testimony earlier, are a formerly freedman family. Pastor Paul pointed out the many homes of other church members along the tour close to the compressor station site.

Brush arbors were places near white churches that were granted to enslaved peoples for worship, but always outside under an arbor of brush with a raised mound of dirt for the preacher. **Union Hill Baptist Church** broke off from the brush arbor church at the white Mulberry Grove Baptist Church located near the former Bondurant Huguenot plantation. As it is reported by Charles White, the local black historian, Union Grove broke off from Union Hill after a dispute between two brother deacons of Union Hill.

Oba told a story of meeting one of the white descendants of the plantation owner during her door-to-door visits, and they showed her the charter from the King of England granting them the land. Oba said that it was “a moment of gut-wrenching, palpable recognition of who had lived and been oppressed here.”

Oba shared that Buckingham County was a “burnt county” because the court house was burned by arson shortly after emancipation to destroy records of masters and slave ownership, as well as the Freedman Bureau records, which were constructed to help freed former enslaved people with their rights and protect them from former slave owners.

The **modest homes** in Union Hill illustrated how dense the neighborhood is and consequently the number of people whose health and safety are at risk. Oba pointed out the large cut tree easement near **Marie Gillespie's home**. Oba remarked how Marie and her husband were never informed about the cutting and were awakened by chainsaws and dozens of men close to her home early one morning. They also cut near Yogaville and on some land of another clean air advocate, while an order not to cut during the migratory bird and nesting season had been issued. Oba and the landowners felt this was a demoralizing tactic and sent a message that the pipeline was inevitable.

**Ella Rose's home** is within 150 feet of the compressor station land. Her brother and sister-in-law live across the road. All three of them are elderly and thus especially vulnerable to toxic pollution; Rose's sister-in-law already has a severe respiratory condition.

The main stop on the tour was the **compressor station land**, where the ACP is planned to intersect with the Transco Williams pipeline. Activists feel that it is likely that this planned intersection facilitates fracked-gas transport to Cove Point where Dominion Energy has a large liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facility.

According to Oba, the site chosen by Dominion for the compressor station is likely to have many of the previously mentioned unmarked graves because it was once part of a large plantation called Variety Shades. This was not in the cultural and resource report submitted to FERC by ACP, and a search for graves has not occurred. The purchase of this piece of land was from a LLC company named Variety Shades and some of the descendants of the plantation owners profited greatly from the sale, being paid 2.5 million dollars for 68 acres of totally unimproved land.

One third of those who live near the proposed compressor station, determined by self-reporting in a door-to-door demographic study of 99 homes, are descendants of the freedmen enslaved by Variety Shades. The value of these residents' property has been greatly reduced and these residents will be now exposed to the many health risks mentioned earlier during the panel discussion.

The Union Hill neighborhood is 500 times more densely populated than what was reported for the surrounding area in the ACP report to FERC, which means that it is classified rural rather than suburban. This means thinner pipes, fewer shut off valves and odorant detectors to warn of leaks.

Oba also pointed out that three very young children live directly across the road from the compressor station land.

**The man camp land** sits directly across from the compressor station land, where a permit was recently granted to the owners to develop a work camp facility. This camp for pipeline and compressor station workers will be an additional burden on the community, because of construction noise, pulls on the water table, and security threats.

Recommended Reading:

*The Hidden and the Forgotten* by Charles W. White

Book about the history of Buckingham County written by a local African American historian

## Delegation Recommendations and Conclusion

The **Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham County** concluded with a discussion reflecting the experiences and information learned. One major point that reverberated throughout the conversation was the sacred right of every person to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and to be safe on their land.

Recommendations were made to decision-makers and Virginians of faith to stand with the communities of Union Hill and Yogaville as they continue to resist Dominion Energy's efforts to place a dangerous source of pollution in their community.



Dominion Energy does not yet have all of the permits that it needs for the ACP and recently suffered several setbacks when permits to go through our natural forests were revoked for the MVP and ACP and a stop work order was issued for the ACP. For the ACP Buckingham compressor station, the air pollution permit has not yet been granted with the [public comment period](#) running until September 11 and a [public hearing](#) on September 11 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in Buckingham County Middle School at 1184 High School Road. Additionally, legal efforts are underway by some local faith communities centered on the county's issuance of the SUP.

Community members and delegates committed to send in comments themselves and encouraged fellow people of faith and the broader community across the Commonwealth to send in comments during the air pollution permit comment period in addition to showing up in-person to testify at the public hearing. They encouraged the respectful writing and circulation of letters to Air Pollution Control Board Members individually to ensure that they are aware of the plight of Union Hill and to encourage them to deny the permit. Please see Figure 1 for contact information.

<b>Air Board Member</b>	<b>Mailing Address</b>
Richard D. Langford, <i>Chair</i>	Blacksburg, Virginia Mailing address: 1106 Horseshoe Lane, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
Samuel A. Bleicher	Arlington, Virginia Mailing address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
William H. Ferguson	Newport News, Virginia Mailing address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
Roy A. Hoagland	Midlothian, Virginia Mailing Address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
Ignacia S. Moreno	McLean, Virginia Mailing Address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
Nicole M. Rovner	Richmond, Virginia Mailing Address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
Rebecca R. Rubin	Fredericksburg, Virginia Mailing address: c/o Office of Regulatory Affairs, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218

**Figure 1. Air Pollution Control Board Members**

A large portion of the conversation focused on the importance of educating clergy, faith leaders, faith communities, and youth so that a broader understanding of the impacts of the compressor station, pipelines, and fossil fuel infrastructure could be understood. The delegation encouraged faith leaders to sign on in support of clean renewable energy instead and encouraged faith communities across Virginia to hold screenings of video testimonies from



the residents of Union Hill and Yogaville. Videos and visuals can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Community members expressed their willingness to travel to dialogue with faith communities around Virginia. Artists and musicians were also encouraged to get involved. Contact Elizabeth Stevens at [estevens@vaip.org](mailto:estevens@vaip.org) to connect with Union Hill and Yogaville community members.

A call was made to uphold unity, love and compassion as efforts continue to move forward with a focus on environmental justice. The **Religious Fact-Finding Delegation to Buckingham County** reached consensus in continuing communication and organizing through a clergy collective to affirm commitment to each other and to Union Hill. To join this new collective of people of faith holding community together, contact Elizabeth Stevens at [estevens@vaip.org](mailto:estevens@vaip.org). Starting on September 4, prayers for both the strength and renewal of the residents of Buckingham and those across Virginia being impacted by the ACP and MVP and decision makers in Virginia will be raised at 12:00 p.m. noon everyday until the public hearing.

There was a deep understanding of the important role of state decision makers and elected officials. Heavy emphasis was placed on the necessity of leaders such as Governor Ralph Northam acting on energy issues in a way that aligns with the moral values inherent in environmentalism and understanding that being a steward means caring for all of Creation, including our neighbors. The intrinsic worth of all Creation and respect of human beings should always be cherished.