**Swami Dayananda**

My name is Swami Dayananda and I am one of the monastic members of Yogaville community in Buckingham, Virginia. I want to talk with you, share with you about clean air, clean water, good soil, gifts from God for all creation. We call it human rights, but it is also for animals, trees, forests, rivers, streams, everything. It is creation rights. All things created have the natural rights to the basic necessity for life – clean air, water and soil.

That right will be violated by the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline in the name of more jobs and better economy. The harm will outweighs whatever benefit the pipeline will bring. This is the case of profit over people and the environment.

So, from that spirit, and also the environmental justice issues, I believe as Cornel West who said “justice is what love looks like in public”, and that is what we are here for. It’s a spiritual movement for justice. I don't believe I can be doing any of this if I did not feel the connection with one and all of your concerns for your people’s and environments’ health and safety.

Yogaville was founded by Sri Swami Satchitananda, who is well known for opening Woodstock and the teachings of Integral Yoga. Integral Yoga had its 50th anniversary in 2016. It offers people how to live a healthy, peaceful and useful life. Light of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS) in Yogaville was built for the purpose of contributing to peace by promoting interfaith cooperation and harmony. It respects all faiths and people of all backgrounds come together to meditate and pray. Our motto is: Truth is one, Paths are Many.

There are 275 residents and about 10,000 annual visitors who come. All of us will be impacted should the proposed ACP come. Amongst the values we live by such as non-violence and truthfulness, we have ecological awareness that speaks of the sacredness of mother nature, reverence for all creation and that we wish to live sustainably, starting with renewable energy.

We meditate and do hatha yoga for health. Breathing practice is one of the most important practices of yoga for our vitality. And we have also adaptive yoga for those who are not able to do regular yoga practices, because yoga for physical health is for everyone. Our organic farm provide fresh produce; we offer vegetarian meals three times a day 365 days a year.

The beautiful and serene James River flows right by us. And we have eagles, deer, bear and many other animals; there are streams and over 20 bubbling springs. Yogaville Environmental Solutions was created in early 2015 when we found out that the proposed pipeline was coming very ½ mile from us and in this beautiful environment we have.

The proposed horizontal directional drilling across the James River is going to be very destructive to the wetland ecology and cause possible pollution not only to our water but to the water downstream. The long term slow leakage of methane from the pipes can potentially impact our farm land next to James River on the flood plain.

Our neighbors about 5 miles away, people of Union Hill Baptist churches, and we have become very good friends. The proposed compressor station is right in the middle of mostly African American Union Hill churches and the homes of their congregation. The negative health impact will be significant. This is an environmental justice issue. According to the wind directions,

Yogaville will also be impacted by air pollution.

We are now blessed to have clean air, water and soil for our daily life. People from all around the world come to retreat, relax rejuvenate, and heal. The short term and long term impact of the proposed pipeline and the compressor station deprive us of our human rights to clean air and water and affect our daily lifestyle of health and peace. Our safety will also be in jeopardy as our entire property will be within the blast zone in case of the pipeline explosion.

Our life will be changed forever and we will not be able to provide the same service as before to those who come to retreat. Our very purpose of existing is compromised. We ask the United Nations to help us and many other communities along the proposed pipeline facing disruption to their very basic human rights.

Thank you.