Russell Chisholm Testimony

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you to the Tribunal for this opportunity to speak on behalf of my community. While I am NOT a landowner directly on the MVP route, I am a United States Army veteran who swore an oath to protect and defend against all enemies foreign and domestic. Clearly we have a domestic enemy coming to our community of Newport. I’m called out a lot to invoke my veteran status not because it puts me in a particularly special class of people, but because with that oath to defend and protect, that's a lifelong mission. I have found within my community and Newport really an opportunity to continue to serve in that way. I'm following the leadership of the people in that community in a lot of ways.

So while we are starting out this next section here in panel to speak directly to these environmental issues, a reminder that I want to leave this panel with is that within this environment, this fragile region that we live in, there are human beings much like the community of Newport that I’m from. We have risen together to defend not just our water and access to health and the rural quality of life that we have, but to also defend everyone downstream from us. So that's really the crux of that mission: to defend that oath. It is an obligation that I personally feel to continue to see and recognize the people all throughout this fight whether it be our elderly rural residents who, as you can see on the on the map here.

This is the town of Newport. This line here is the center line of the Mountain Valley pipeline. The red area is the blast area and the yellow band there is the evacuation route. This is what the industry refers to as mitigation so basically if we can get out of there in time we can survive. They can mitigate the effects of this by hoping the people escape in time. So it's a massive threat. It is a threat directly to the environment, but primarily you know it is a threat to our people, our citizens who live there so from that frontline community of Newport that mission extends downstream to our fellow citizens in Union Hill and along coastal Virginia threatened by flooding and across the entire region to indigenous and native relatives really even across the country.

Newport could be referred to as Ground Zero and so I just want to say to the folks in from all the way from Standing Rock to Buckingham, to everyone along the ACP: We still see you. We will continue to fight alongside you.