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Virginia Board Confirms: Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline Could Cost Virginians up to \$2.3 billion

WASHINGTON (March 12, 2018) –Virginia's top economic watchdog today validated expert analysis showing that Dominion Energy's proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline could cost Virginia ratepayers up to \$2.3 billion, decisively refuting Dominion's faulty claims that the pipeline would save customers on their electric bills.

The Virginia State Corporation Commission issued its final order approving Dominion's 2017 Integrated Resource Plan, its long-term plan that included the utility's plan to build the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, a proposed pipeline that would run 600 miles between West Virginia to the North Carolina/South Carolina border.

In its order, the commission accepted—over Dominion's objection—analysis from Gregory M. Lander, a veteran natural gas industry analyst. Lander's analysis relied on Dominion's data to find that building the pipeline would increase costs for Dominion ratepayers between \$1.61 billion and \$2.36 billion.

Dominion had contended, based on a more than three-year-old study, that building the pipeline would cut customers' energy bills by several hundred million dollars annually and create many jobs.

"It's now clear as a bell that the Atlantic Coast pipeline is not a good deal for Virginians. This is a speculative pipeline in search of a market, and that market is not Virginia," said Walton Shepherd, Virginia policy director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Not only is this pipeline unneeded, it would burden Virginia ratepayers and therefore the state's economy. Virginia ratepayers shouldn't have to pony up as much \$2.3 billion to underwrite Dominion's pipeline venture.

"That's not right. That's not fair. And we call on Gov. Northam to step in and protect Virginia's consumers and economy by conducting a full economic review of the merits of this project, through his Secretary of Commerce and Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy."

Rather than contest Lander's cost analysis, Dominion had filed a motion at the doorstep of the August hearing asking that Lander's testimony be stricken from the record as irrelevant. But the corporation commission today rejected that request, leaving Lander's cost analysis uncontested by Dominion and part of the record in its final order.

Furthermore, the corporation commission ordered Dominion to address the impact of a bill the Virginia General Assembly just approved calling for Dominion to ramp up investment in clean energy and energy efficiency in its next Integrated Resource Plan due in May.

NRDC and other groups, as well as a number of landowners, have raised other concerns about the controversial pipeline, showing that it would stifle investment in Virginia's clean energy economy, threaten water quality, and impose an especially steep financial burden on low-income Virginians who already struggle to meet their energy costs.

Even without the added potential costs from the Atlantic Coast project, Virginians already pay some of the highest energy costs in the nation, documented [here](#).

Lander's analysis is here: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/docketsearch/DOCS/3gy601!.PDF>

A blog by Shepherd on the cost increases shown in the analysis is here: <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/walton-shepherd>

A blog by Amy Mall, senior policy analyst in NRDC's Nature program on the pipeline's cost and burden on low-income families is here: <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/amy-mall/atlantic-coast-pipeline-more-bad-news-north-carolina>

Another blog by Mall on 10 reasons to stop the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline is here: <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/amy-mall/top-ten-concerns-mountain-valley-atlantic-coast-pipelines>

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