**Tess Aramuso**

I'm speaking here on behalf of the people of Norfolk and Tidewater Virginia, whose water supply is threatened by the ACP. How many people here know that fact? On Tuesday October 24th, 2017 Norfolk City Council received a bid from the Atlantic Coast pipeline for permanent easements on land that it owns in Suffolk. Dominion wants this proposed frack gas pipeline to cross existing easements now owned by the City of Norfolk, that were of-course originally stolen from Native Americans. These easements include areas of both the Lake, Prince and Western Branch reservoirs that contain drinking water pipelines. By their own admission, Norfolk's utility Department has only been able to assess the potential environmental risks to these important reservoirs using data provided directly by Dominion, and problematic data provided by FERC. They simply do not have the staff and budget to do more research. As a resident of Norfolk and as a mother I am not satisfied what this means of assessment. Also, by their own admission the City of Norfolk and other regulators agree that boring pipelines under our priceless reservoirs cannot be assessed as completely safe. Always quote unquote low risk, but why is there any level of risk acceptable to our priceless water supply. These easements go through Marcie Finger areas of our reservoirs. If God forbid an accident occurred at any point during their operation; what would the cost of the cleanup be with the five-million-dollar liability insurance required in the deal being not nearly enough in the event of an accident. Is there any acceptable level of risk for releasing frack gas and its associated hydrocarbon liquid into our drinking water and marshes? What is the true worth of our water? Why are we even taking these risks to our drinking water supply with this unneeded and unwanted pipeline?

 The argument that more frack gas is needed in our region is a suspicious one. Most of the gas that would be produced with this pipeline will go out of state, most likely overseas. If more energy is needed here then let Norfolk take the lead in bringing safe clean renewable energy to our region now, such as localized solar farms. We are also a city that is highly vulnerable to the devastating effects of climate change and subsiding land. This vulnerability is

an identified national security risk. Frack gas releases methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas, in every step of its production through anticipated release and compressor station operations, such as the one proposed in Union Hill, through unanticipated leakage. This is not an energy we need to commit our region to now and for decades to come, when the world is moving to clean and renewable energy.

Another agenda item for the Norfolk City Council that night was accepting a federal grant to clean up environmental toxins in four designated brownfield areas of our city. One of them is Harbor Park. At this time Virginia natural gas is planning to bore under the Elizabeth River to put the unwanted southside connective distribution line, which is our very own spur of the ACP under it. How can it be safe to bore under our river in a brownfield area? How can we accept that it is a quote unquote low risk to our priceless beautiful Elizabeth River, which we as a community and region have spent decades cleaning? How can we accept the risk of drilling under a river in an area that has absorbed toxic pollution from hundreds of years of industrial use? Why are we ignoring the input of hundreds of impacted property owners again in primarily minority neighborhoods including our own Norfolk neighborhood of Berkley, who do not want this pipeline and its associated risks?

I want everybody to know that the vote on this is coming before our City Council on November 14th. You'll be happy to know that all the activist community is on top of it. We have several organizers from various groups most of which I'm part of, Mother's Up Front, Hampton Roads Sierra Club's, and of-course other local organizations. What I was asked to bring here today was basically help for this council meeting on the 14th. What we're hoping to do is get some experts of our own to come in, so councils in the meaning could get three minutes each to speak. We'd like to get some of our own experts to come in and speak on the risks of horizontal drilling; I know Thomas addressed that terrible explosions are a very common development. Also, I think it would be really important to bring an understanding to our council about other risks such as the egregious environmental racism proposed at Union Hill, because I think that our community, including our leadership, don't know it. They don't understand the issues, they don't know it. So, anyway, that was the other thing I wanted to say here today, and make this plea, and say we want to personally thank everyone especially our judges for being here. This is how I know we're going to get it, because of all of us; and, also because of her Lady Bertus on our flag, and on our seal. Since the inception of our Commonwealth and her power, ladies and gentlemen, is “Right Makes Might.”