Marion Kanour testimony (ACP)

This has been a long day for you. Thank you for being here and to all of you who have helped to make this happen today. It's a wonderful time for us all to be together to give testimony.

My name is Marian Kanour and I'm the priest and rector at Grace Episcopal Church in Massie's Mill which is in Nelson County. That's also where I live. My particular home is not in jeopardy but many of the homes and properties of my parishioners are in the line at the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

You’ve heard testimony from many different perspectives today, urging the DEQ, FERC and our elected representatives to refuse to allow the proposed ACP and MVP to go forward. My own perspective focuses on environmental justice and our obligations as stewards of the earth. This perspective isn't new to our consciousness. In fact, the Hebrew book of Genesis in its English translation proclaims humans have dominion over the

earth. Not the kind of “dominion” Dominion Resources advocates. Instead, we're asked to hold a caregiver’s reverence for the creation - a reverence uncompromised by greed or profit motive. We’re called to be good stewards of the creation and we have the ability to rise to that call. The three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity, speak with one voice regarding human ability to make life-affirming decisions. In the Torah in the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy it clearly states, “Choose life so you and your descendants may live.” 13th century Sufi mystic Jalal a-Din Muhammad Rumi writes, “You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop. You impact the whole.” John Donne, English poet

and priest, writes in 1624, “No man is an island/ entire of itself/ and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls/ It tolls for thee.”

This understanding of human responsibility and agency was given clear form on September 14th, 2017 by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, when it delayed by three months its decision on whether to grant a 401 Quality and Buffer permit to the owners of the ACP. In a letter to the ACP, state environmental officials laid out in two pages a myriad of missing information, some of it very basic: construction drawings, erosion control plans, a calculation of cumulative impacts and stream restoration plans. Likewise, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection in a letter dated September 15, 2017 stated it is vacating the water quality certification issued in March regarding the proposed MVP, following its review of the projected impact on the state's waters. Clergy and lay persons alike applaud these examples of regulatory integrity. We call upon Governor McAuliffe to follow the principled lead of his fellow governors by directing the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to proceed carefully and thoroughly in the review of the water quality certification applications submitted by the MVP and ACP.

The ACP LLC recently petitioned the FERC to expedite federal approval to meet their profit-driven timeline, hoping to shorten the due diligence of detailed review by the DEQ. With their focus on profit, it is abundantly clear that the ACP LLC lacks sufficient concern for the environment as well as the health and safety of West Virginians, Virginians and North Carolinians. Most telling was the dissent opinion of Cheryl Lafleur of the FERC, who disagreed with the approval for the proposed ACP and MVP given by the Commission of which she is a member. She writes, “I acknowledge that if the applicants were to adopt an alternative solution, it would require considerable additional work and time. However, the decision before the Commission is simply whether to approve or reject these projects which will be in place for decades. Given the environmental impacts and possible superior alternatives, approving these two project pipelines is not a decision I can support.”

The Virginia DEQ must do its job to require thorough site-specific individual permitting for each and every stream and water crossing in order to protect the earth and the people in harm's way. Anything less is an abdication of the DEQ’s mandated responsibilities as an official steward of the land and of the public trust. We also urge gubernatorial candidates Ralph Northam and Ed Gillespie to refrain from stating the future of the proposed pipelines is a federal decision and is out of the state's realm of influence. That is simply untrue, as evidenced by the recent decisions by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection - decisions the Virginia DEQ has the power and obligation to replicate. The sitting governor, as well as those aspiring to that position, must earn the trust of the people by speaking truth to corporate power and influence. More than ever, we need leaders with courage, integrity and a moral compass to insist on safeguarding the creation and to take the long view regarding sustainability. As farmer activist Wendell Berry states so poetically: “Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias. Say that your main crop is the forest that you did not plant and that you will not live to harvest.” The Episcopal Book of Common Prayer offers this prayer echoing similar thinking regarding human agency: “Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature that no one may suffer from our abuse of them and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty.” We have the ability to give this prayer form. Likewise, we have the power to follow greed and give form to its demands. The choice is clear.

May the governor and the Virginia DEQ have the courage to use the power given them to reject the environmental abuse required by the proposed ACP and MVP. Our children's children are not yet able to speak for themselves. The governor and the Virginia DEQ must speak for them. May

they choose their words and actions wisely.