

For immediate release: August 13, 2019

Expert contact: Donna Chavis, (910) 827-7931, dchavis@foe.org

Mac Legerton, (910) 736-5573, mac.legerton@gmail.com

Communications contact: Erin Jensen, 202-222-0722, EJensen@foe.org

Groups Petition North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to Revoke the 401 Water Quality Permit of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline

RALEIGH, N.C. – The NC Climate Solutions Coalition and Friends of the Earth were joined by other environmental advocacy groups and individuals today at a press conference in the Press Room of the NC General Assembly. The groups announced the filing of a legal petition with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) to revoke the 401 Water Quality Permit of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The Co-Petitioners are represented by attorney and Duke University clinical law professor Ryke Longest, who spoke at the Press Conference, along with a research team of law students. Professor Longest said, “Working with the great community leaders, students and scholars whose work contributed to this petition has inspired me. Impacts from the ACP on communities are too great and its justification has evaporated.”

According to the petitioners, the 401 Certification should be revoked on the grounds that newly discovered information shows that the project scope, purpose, alternatives analysis, related facilities and environmental justice impacts were fundamentally mistaken.

“This petition offers the NC DEQ an opportunity to act in the best interests of the citizens of North Carolina. The petition details how the ACP LLC withheld important information related to the pipeline's major environmental impact and disproportionate burden on the Indigenous peoples of Robeson County, NC. It supports our position that the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline is unnecessary, will be costly in the extreme to consumers and have devastating impacts on frontline communities all along its route,” said **Donna Chavis, senior campaigner at Friends of the Earth**. “The Secretary of the NC DEQ must direct a full review of the legal petition and act to suspend and revoke the 401 Certification for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.”

The proposed ACP is two years behind schedule and substantially over budget. Recent estimates project the cost at \$7 billion-\$7.8 billion – some one-third higher than the original \$5.1 billion – with full operation pushed back to 2021. It is expected that consumers will bear the costs of these extraordinary cost overruns.

“North Carolina Climate Solution Coalition supports “clean renewable energy”. Natural gas is neither. The ACP is a short-term project with negative long-term impacts. In addition, this project locks the state and its citizens into a destructive use of energy resources,” said Gayle Tuch, Chair of North Carolina Climate Solution Coalition’s Board of Directors.

On the filing of the petition, Rev. Mac Legerton, Interim Executive Director of the NC Climate Solutions Coalition and resident of Robeson County stated, “ Newfound evidence indicates that the secondary and cumulative impacts of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and its associated projects will be major, not minor as claimed in supporting documents, particularly in Robeson County, NC. We request that the NC Department of Environmental Quality investigate these new facts fully and act to suspend and revoke the 401 Certification issued for the Atlantic

Coast Pipeline.” Rev. Legerton went on to say, “The Atlantic Coast Pipeline is not only environmentally harmful; it is also economically irresponsible and unnecessary. It will burden the public with unfair and needless rate hikes. It will counter and eliminate the impact of all public and private efforts to reduce carbon emissions in our State. Furthermore, the ACP places a substantial, unfair burden on the indigenous people of Robeson County, concentrating up to nine natural gas projects in an 8-mile radius in the heart of the Lumbee community”.

As the petition states, “DEQ should revoke the 401 Certification due to this new information showing the truly massive scope and scale of the ACP and its impacts in Robeson County, where the “Terminus” is really a “Launchpad.”

###

Friends of the Earth fights to protect our environment and create a healthy and just world. We speak truth to power and expose those who endanger people and the planet. Our campaigns work to hold politicians and corporations accountable, transform our economic systems, protect our forests and oceans, and revolutionize our food & agriculture systems.