



Environmental Tools

Here are five environmental regulatory and review tools to provide comprehensive oversight and thorough technical evaluation to ensure that water quality is protected in Virginia during the construction of proposed natural gas pipelines.

1. Environmental impact review

Along with Virginia's other natural resource agencies, DEQ submitted numerous comments and recommendations on the [draft environmental impact statements](#) published by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for these pipelines. For example, Virginia identified specific concerns in a number of stream segments crossing watersheds. Virginia recommended additional pre- and post-construction water quality monitoring, heightened erosion and sedimentation control practices, and/or pre-impact characterization of proposed stream and wetland crossings.

2. Stormwater, erosion and sediment control

DEQ is requiring each pipeline developer to submit detailed, project-specific [erosion and sedimentation control and stormwater plans](#) for every foot of land disturbance related to pipeline construction, including access roads and construction lay-down areas. These plans must comply with Virginia's stormwater and erosion and sediment control regulations that are designed to protect water quality during and after construction. These plans will be reviewed by qualified professionals (either DEQ staff or third-party engineers) and are posted for public review. Deadline for input is October 13, 2017. An engineering consulting firm will assist in DEQ's review of the plans. The cost of this work is estimated to be approximately \$2.2 million.

3. Federal wetlands and stream regulation

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the federal regulatory partner in permitting dredge and fill activities in wetlands and streams. The Corps' [Nationwide Permit \(NWP\) 12](#) requires that water quality is protected during the construction of pipelines in wetlands and streams. The Corps will evaluate each wetland and stream crossing to see if it is consistent with the conditions of NWP 12. Because the Corps' permit only covers construction activities that cross a wetland or stream, DEQ is addressing other water quality impacts through its water certification authority. The [conditions](#) provided in NWP 12 are comprehensive and include: coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on threatened and endangered species; requirements to restore the pre-construction conditions at stream crossings using materials that mimic the natural stream bed; mitigation for all permanent loss over 1/10 acre and/or 300 linear feet of waters; a recommendation discouraging directional drilling in karst topography; a recommendation to use Virginia native species for revegetation; and extensive guidance and requirements for countersinking pipes.

4. Virginia water quality certification

DEQ is requiring [water quality certification](#) conditions for all potentially impacted water resources related to activities that may affect water quality outside the temporary construction impacts to stream and wetland crossings. These will provide reasonable assurance that water quality standards are maintained in Virginia's streams. DEQ has evaluated this information and developed additional water quality conditions. The public now has an opportunity to review and comment on these conditions. DEQ also is holding public hearings on the draft conditions. Once the comment period has ended, DEQ will recommend certification conditions for the State Water Control Board's consideration.

5. Water quality monitoring

DEQ will conduct its own [water quality monitoring](#) to evaluate water quality conditions at a number of locations. Monitoring is expected to begin in the fall of 2017.

More information

Pipelines page:
bit.do/DEQpipelines

Erosion and Sediment Control plans for pipelines:
bit.do/DEQESCpipelines

Nationwide Permit 12:
bit.do/NWP12

Nationwide Permit 12 conditions:
bit.do/NWP12conditions

Water quality monitoring:
bit.do/DEQwqmonitoring

DEQ calendar:
bit.do/DEQcalendar

News feeds:
bit.do/DEQcast

401 guidance memo:
bit.do/401guidance

VA law portal:
law.lis.virginia.gov/

VA regulatory Town Hall:
townhall.virginia.gov