

Environmental Tools for Natural Gas Pipelines

Here are the primary environmental regulatory and review tools that DEQ and other agencies use to provide comprehensive oversight and thorough technical evaluation to ensure that water quality is protected in Virginia during the construction of natural gas pipelines. Find the latest information at deq.virginia.gov/pipelineupdates.

Environmental impact review

Along with Virginia's other state agencies, DEQ submitted numerous comments and recommendations on the draft environmental impact statements (EIS) prepared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP). 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 which were incorporated into the final EIS in 2017.

Stormwater, erosion and sediment control

DEQ required 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 erosion and sediment control [regulations](#) and stormwater management [regulations](#) that are designed to protect water quality during and after construction. These plans are being reviewed by qualified professionals (either DEQ staff or third-party engineers) and are posted for public review. The deadline for public input was October 13, 2017 for the ACP and October 22, 2017 for the MVP. An engineering consulting firm is assisting DEQ's review of the plans. The cost of this work is estimated to be approximately \$2.2 million. As of June 2018, MVP plans have been reviewed and approved; ACP plans are under review.

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 has evaluated each wetland and stream crossing to ensure construction is consistent with the conditions of NWP 12. Because the Corps' permit only applies to 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. Find the latest information at deq.virginia.gov/pipelineupdates.



Virginia water quality certification

DEQ has required 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. This certification places additional construction conditions to address environmental concerns such as karst terrain, steep slopes, public water supplies, trout streams and areas prone to rockslides. These conditions will provide reasonable assurance that water quality standards are maintained in Virginia's streams during and after construction. The draft of proposed additional conditions to protect water quality was made available for public comment. The comment period ended on August 22, 2017. For MVP, based upon the report and recommendations DEQ submitted to the State Water Control Board, the Board approved the certification with on December 8, 2017. The ACP was approved with conditions on December 12, 2017.

Inspections and monitoring

DEQ, in partnership with scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey and Virginia Commonwealth University, is conducting water quality monitoring at a number of stream crossings before, during, and after construction. Reports related to site inspections and water quality monitoring are available for review. Two erosion control inspectors conduct daily inspections in active construction areas to ensure compliance and respond to concerns. Indicators of water quality (turbidity, temperature, specific conductance, dissolved oxygen and pH) are measured every five minutes, and all data are available online to the public within 1-2 hours of collection. DEQ will review all data during construction activities and utilize the real-time capability to direct inspection resources as appropriate. Visit the [Water Monitoring Plan for Pipelines](#) webpage to learn more about the comprehensive program to monitor the fish, insects and physical conditions of sites along the route.

Pollution and Compliance Complaints

Use the [pollution reporting](#) form to report specific water pollution and non-compliance incidents to DEQ. When submitting a complaint, please describe the situation and give a specific location. After submittal, you will receive a Reference ID # that can be used to review the status. Each month, the pollution and permit database will be available for download to see the list of investigations and their status. General inquiries or concerns can be directed to MountainValleyPipeline@deq.virginia.gov or AtlanticCoastPipeline@deq.virginia.gov. All other concerns should be submitted to landownerHelp@ferc.gov or call 877-337-2237.

Coordination

DEQ is coordinating its inspections, investigations and compliance efforts with other [state](#) and [federal](#) agencies. Please direct your concerns to the appropriate regulatory agency:

Water pollution (erosion, sedimentation, runoff), oil spills, waste management — [DEQ](#)

Wetlands and stream crossings—[US Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Forest buffers or tree cutting; wildlife, migratory birds, and bats; cultural resources, easements, boundaries and land access — [FERC](#)

Karst, surface water withdrawals and other upland conditions—DEQ &/or FERC