

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

www.BREDL.org PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629 BREDL@skybest.com (336) 982-2691

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

APRIL 7, 2020

### **CONTACT:**

Marvin Winstead (252) 478-5442

Louis Zeller (336) 982-2691

### **Landowners Fight Pipeline Invasion During Pandemic Request Filed to Adopt Resolution Opposing Atlantic Coast Pipeline**

Landowners on the route of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline are fighting to prevent the company's financial appraisers from entering their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a letter to Nash County delivered Friday, residents formally requested that the Board of Commissioners reject the pipeline, citing reductions in safety measures and harassment of landowners.

In the request, Marvin Winstead, a Nash County farmer, said, "Over the last few days I have been harassed by Dominion attorneys to allow out-of-state assessors onto my property and even into my home as part of the ongoing eminent domain process."

Winstead was incensed by the very notion that protective personal equipment-clad company appraisers were seeking entry into his home, adding, "The risk presented by the COVID-19 virus matters little when it suits them. There is no excuse for their behavior."

Winstead said that the pipeline company is "acting like a bully" informing him on a Friday that they would be on his property on Monday. He is keeping his gates locked to fend them off.

The letter to the Commission also cited a recent order easing operator qualifications and training by the federal agency charged with maintaining pipeline safety. On March 20, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

announced that because of the COVID-19 virus it would not enforce drug testing and other safety requirements.

Louis Zeller, executive director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, “The pipeline industry is showing callous disregard for public health in two ways: It excuses itself from safety regulations; meanwhile, it threatens contamination of residents, all during the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis.”

The Nash County Board of Commissioners met on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and Winstead vowed to keep putting the request before the county. In addition to being a farmer, he is a community organizer for BREDL and founder of Nash Stop The Pipeline.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, founded in 1984, is a regionwide grassroots organization with chapters along the Atlantic Coast Pipeline route from Buckingham, Virginia to Fayetteville, North Carolina.

-end-