



Preserve Craig ~ Sustaining the Quality of Life We Value

P.O. Box 730, New Castle, VA 24127 Phone: (540) 309-9560
www.PreserveCraig.org Email: PreserveCraig@gmail.com

August 1, 2016

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: CECW-CO-R
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal

Re: Comments on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Proposal to Reissue and Modify Nationwide Permit 12, Docket No. COE-2015-0017

Preserve Craig is alarmed by the rapid expansion of gas pipeline development for the transport of gas from the Marcellus Shale region. Gas pipelines of unprecedented length and size are proposed to be built through the most rugged terrain in the mid-Atlantic region, and in some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems remaining in the lower 48 states.

Nationwide Permit 12 ("NWP 12") is a general 404 permit that the Corps uses to permit pipelines and other utility projects with up to a half-acre of "loss of waters of the US"; but the Corps applies NWP 12 separately to each water crossing along a pipeline route. The result is the approval of massive and controversial gas pipeline construction projects without any public participation or transparent environmental review process. To the best of our knowledge, prior to 2012, the Corps had never before used NWP 12 to permit hundreds or thousands of water crossings to approve a major pipeline project without an individual 404 permit, or without any project-specific review conducted by the Corps or any other federal agency.

We assert that the practice of regulating massive gas pipelines under the NWP 12 violates the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA"). Specifically, there is no evidence that there is any mitigation upon which the Corps can rely to make a Finding of No Significant Impact for the use of the NWP 12 to regulate gas pipeline construction in the mid-Atlantic mountain region. Accordingly, the Corps must exclude gas pipeline projects in the mid-Atlantic mountain region from coverage under NWP 12.

In support of the exclusion of gas pipeline projects in the mid-Atlantic mountain region from coverage under NWP 12, Preserve Craig adopts and incorporates the comments submitted by the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition by letter dated August 1, 2016.

The Corps has a duty under NEPA to analyze the effectiveness of mitigation, which it has not done for the construction of 42-inch diameter gas pipelines on severe slopes with highly erodible soils and karst geology.

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US Army Corps of Engineers
August 1, 2016
page two

We urge the Corps to exclude the mid-Atlantic mountain region from coverage under the NWP 12 because there is no analysis or evidence of the efficacy of mitigation in the extraordinary conditions that are common throughout the Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, and Appalachian Plateau physiographic provinces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Easterling".

Sam Easterling, Co-Chair
Preserve Craig

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Wolf".

Bill Wolf, Co-Chair
Preserve Craig