



Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

February 22, 2019

The Honorable Tim Kaine
Russell Senate Office Building, 231
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kaine:

I'm writing on behalf of Potomac Appalachian Trail Club – Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter (PATC-SSVC) to oppose Congressional authorization for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) to cross the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) and Blue Ridge Parkway.

The AT is important to many Americans, and it is held in particularly high regard by the trail clubs from Georgia to Maine who originally built the AT and devote countless volunteer hours annually to maintaining it. The 550-mile section of the AT in Virginia is fully one-fourth of the total length. This gives Virginians a special responsibility to guard this unique asset.

PATC-SSVC is based in Waynesboro, Staunton, and Harrisonburg. Our members maintain several sections of the Appalachian Trail and lead many hikes in the area of the proposed ACP crossing south of Waynesboro. The AT is a globally-recognized footpath that annually receives 3 million visitors who come to hike and enjoy the iconic views of the world's oldest mountain range. The AT was completed by trail clubs over 80 years ago and was designated by Congress in 1968 as one of the first two National Scenic Trails in America. It has the distinction of being the longest hiking-only trail in the world. In our view, Congress has a responsibility to protect the integrity of the AT, including its scenic integrity, especially where the



Three Ridges Overlook on the AT and Blue Ridge Parkway

AT crosses federal lands. It is in these very areas, including National Forests, where the scenic and recreational values of the AT are often the greatest, and where protection for these qualities is most attainable.

Our Club has always thought the proposed ACP route was a poor choice because:

- It would cross the AT at a very scenic location, on federal land, and leave a permanent scar on three popular viewsheds clearly visible from the AT and Blue Ridge Parkway: Three Ridges Overlook, Raven’s Roost, and Cedar Cliffs;

- It would cross at a location that is heavily used by hikers accessing the AT from Humpback Rocks, Reeds Gap, and points in between; and
- It would have a negative impact on the viewsheds of Torry Ridge Trail in Sherando Lake Recreation Area, the most popular developed recreation site on the George Washington National Forest.

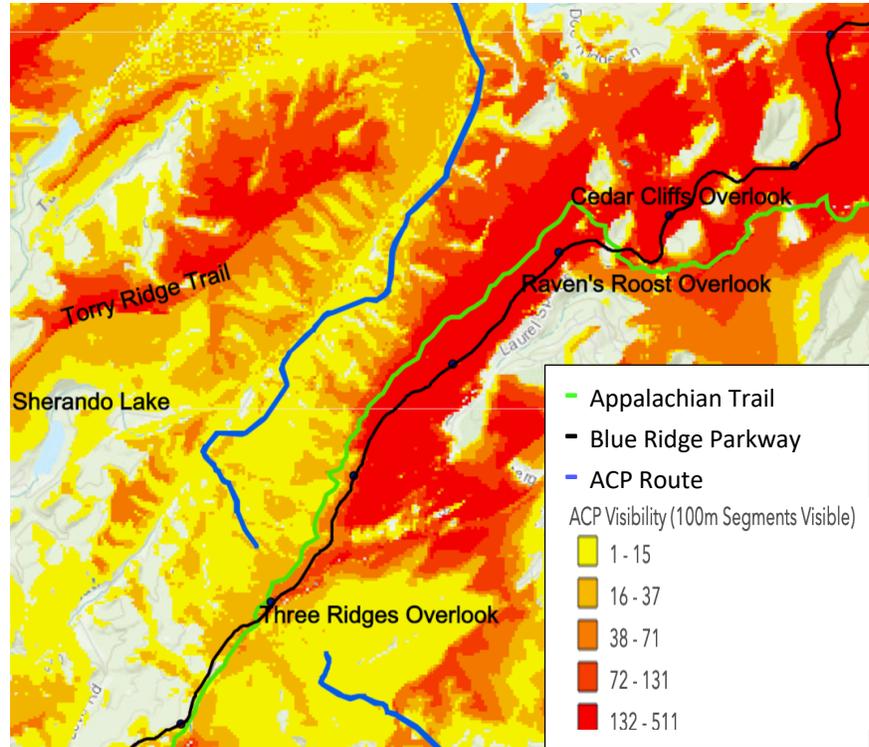
It is hard to imagine a worse location for a pipeline to cross the AT.

We ask that you oppose any bill or rider that would authorize the ACP crossing of the AT in the proposed location, or, more broadly, change current law applicable to the routing of pipelines across the AT. Congressional legislation to this end would set a bad precedent by stepping into the established pipeline permitting process, short-circuiting the legal obligations of federal agencies to evaluate the need for a pipeline, consider alternative routes, and evaluate environmental impacts.

Any crossing of the AT should go through this stringent process.

This particular crossing is problematic for a number of reasons:

- **Lack of Need** The pipeline is not needed to meet current and projected demands, according to several independent studies.



- **Environmental Impacts** The ACP would fragment some of our most intact forested lands, cross twenty-six native trout streams on federal lands, and cause severe impacts to critical groundwater supplies in karst areas;
- **Alternatives not Evaluated** – The NPS, Forest Service, and FERC did not adequately evaluate alternative routes for crossing the AT and Blue Ridge Parkway, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Forest Management Act (NFMA), and other applicable law.

In conclusion, Congressional authorization of an AT crossing for the ACP would circumvent and undermine the laws and regulations that protect the AT, and could lead to future authorizations that would seriously degrade the recreational experience, scenic beauty, and opportunities for solitude that millions of visitors now enjoy.

Thank you for considering our thoughts and concerns on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Cameron
President
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club-Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter
www.ssvc.org
553 Beards Ford Rd.
Mt. Crawford, VA 22841
malcolmgcameron@gmail.com,
(540)234-6273