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U.S. regulators reject request for more hearings on Atlantic Coast pipeline

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Posted: Thursday, May 14, 2015 11:00 pm

By ANDREW CAIN Richmond Times-Dispatch



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

Federal regulators have rejected a request by Virginia's U.S. senators and a congressman for additional public hearings on the proposed Atlantic Coast pipeline.

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In April, Sens. Timothy M. Kaine and Mark R. Warner, both Democrats, and Rep. Robert Hurt, R-5th, said they wanted the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to allow more time and public hearings in order for opponents of the project to have their say, particularly in Nelson and Augusta counties.

In a letter Monday FERC Chairman Norman C. Bay assured Kaine that its staff "will accept and fully review" any comments the commission received after the April 28 deadline to submit comments.

In a separate letter to Warner, Bay said that while he regrets that not all who wished to get to speak at previous meetings, the commission will not hold additional hearings.

"FERC staff has concluded that, based on the 10 scoping meetings that have been held in locations along the pipeline and

A "No Pipeline" sign at the end of a driveway on Route 639 in Nelson County, VA Friday, March 13, 2015. Land in the area is in the path of a new alternative route for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

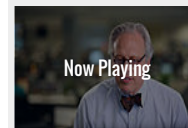
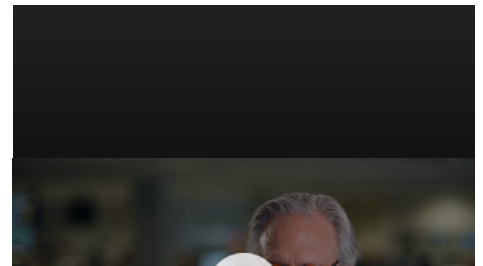
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the over 2,000 written comments received, it has been able to fully identify the issues surrounding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline Project and that additional meetings would not be likely to bring new matters to light," Bay wrote.

"Therefore, FERC staff does not plan to hold additional scoping meetings regarding the project."

The senators' offices said in a joint statement Thursday evening: "While FERC

has assured them that verbal and written comments will receive equal consideration, Senators Kaine and Warner are disappointed that FERC will not be holding additional public scoping meetings on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

"With that said, both senators plan to follow up with FERC in the coming weeks to give voice to a number of the key issues raised with them and their staffs by Virginians with concerns about this project."

Dominion Resources and three energy partners are proposing the \$5 billion, 550-mile pipeline to carry natural gas from West Virginia to southeastern Virginia and North Carolina.

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