

# Opponents' study questions value of Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Synapse study on 550-mile pipeline commissioned by SELC

07/08/2015 by Wayne Barber

The **Southern Environmental Law Center** (SELC) and the recently-formed **Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance** said July 8 that a new study casts doubt on the claimed significant economic benefits of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The study, done by Massachusetts-based **Synapse Energy Economics**, said that benefits of the pipeline are overstated and that pipeline sponsors “fail to account for environmental and societal costs,” the groups said in a news release.

The **Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC**, a corporation formed by **Dominion** (NYSE:D), **Duke Energy** (NYSE:DUK), **Piedmont Natural Gas** (NYSE:PNY) and **AGL Resources** (NYSE:GAS), is proposing to build the \$4.5bn-to-\$5bn pipeline to serve multiple public utilities and their energy needs in Virginia and North Carolina.

The 550-mile interstate natural gas transmission pipeline would start in West Virginia and reach deep into North Carolina.

The Synapse study, done for the pipeline critics, takes issue with two pipeline economic studies that Dominion has released - one prepared by **Chmura Economics** and one prepared by **ICF International**. Both Chmura and ICF are Virginia-based.

SELC commissioned Synapse to review the two reports distributed by Dominion.

Among other things, Synapse maintains that the ICF report's predicted large difference between the natural gas price of the Henry Hub and Dominion South might not materialize.

In addition, Synapse said that the 550-mile, 42-inch pipeline will pass through 26 counties and hundreds of communities. The pipeline could have negative impact on property values, Synapse said.

The construction of the pipeline could also lead to an increase in natural gas drilling in areas along the pipeline route that were not previously developed, including the George Washington National Forest, which is located on the southern edge of the Marcellus Shale formation.

Interstate pipelines often require compressor stations located at various points along the route. “Compressor stations can be noisy and produce air pollutants,” Synapse said in its report.

Elizabeth Stanton, PhD, was one of the chief authors of the Synapse report.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Wayne Barber**

Wayne Barber, Chief Analyst for the GenerationHub, has been covering power generation, energy and natural resources issues at national publications for more than 20 years. Prior to joining PennWell he was editor of Generation Markets Week at SNL Financial for nine years. He has also worked as a business journalist at both McGraw-Hill and Financial Times Energy. Wayne also worked as a newspaper reporter for several years. During his career has visited nuclear reactors and coal mines as well as coal and natural gas power plants.

Wayne can be reached at [wayneb@pennwell.com](mailto:wayneb@pennwell.com).

**For information on how to subscribe to [GenerationHub](#) call 1.800.823.6277 or follow the link.**

**© 2013 PennWell Corporation. All rights reserved.**

---