

For Immediate Release

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FERC Urged to Evaluate Climate Impacts for Controversial Tennessee Gas Pipeline

Groups argue risky new gas pipeline defies Biden Administration goals and warnings in recent IPCC report

WASHINGTON — A coalition of climate, environmental justice, faith, youth, public health, and conservation groups [urged](#) the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to re-evaluate the need and impact of a proposed 32-mile gas pipeline in northern Tennessee. Just last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) delivered a [final warning](#) that new fossil fuel development is incompatible with avoiding the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

Earlier this year the Tennessee Valley Authority made a [final decision](#) to replace its retiring Cumberland coal plant with a new gas plant and pipeline. As the coalition comment notes, TVA already has the [second-largest](#) planned gas buildout by the end of this decade, among all other major US utilities.

“Despite repeated warnings and concerns from advocates, impacted residents and environmental agencies, the pipeline company still managed to leave science at the door to submit a significantly deficient draft that failed to evaluate the environmental impact on our communities, public health and environment,” **Amy Kelly, Campaign Representative for Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign** said. “What FERC must do now is consider public input and by no means allow this pipeline company accompanied by TVA to begin construction.”

As noted in the comment, TVA has no independent oversight and therefore it is incumbent on FERC to complete a full analysis of need for this project that address all deficiencies in TVA’s own analysis of the gas plant and pipeline alternative, including risks to public health, water systems, endangered species, and environmental justice communities. In light of the recent IPCC report the groups urge FERC to comprehensively incorporate all climate impacts associated with this project in its public interest determination.

“Climate change is already having devastating impacts on communities throughout the world,” said **Reverend Paul Slentz with Tennessee Interfaith Power & Light**. “The ruling by FERC on whether to allow the construction of a fossil gas pipeline to a greenhouse gas emitting power plant is therefore not simply an abstract matter of policy but a moral decision that will have a significant impact on people’s lives.”

TVA’s [environmental review](#) for the Cumberland Plant has attracted significant attention, with concerns [raised in comments](#) by the Environmental Protection Agency, environmental organizations, local power companies, elected officials and thousands of private citizens. The EPA [recommended](#) TVA re-analyze the climate impacts of the project and consider other

alternatives, such as distributed renewable energy. In response, over 100 organizations [urged](#) the Biden Administration to intervene in TVA's decision to replace the Cumberland plant with a new gas plant.

“The Tennessee Valley Authority’s hasty decision-making and disregard for community input violates principles of environmental justice and harms everyday Tennesseans,” said **Aaditi Lele, Policy Director with ZeroHour**. “The decision to expand natural gas infrastructure in Tennessee disqualifies safer and healthier renewable alternatives and puts profit over people.”

This proposed project comes soon after TVA ordered rolling blackouts for thousands of customers when coal and gas plants went offline during the record-breaking winter storm Elliot.

TVA is a federally owned corporation that generates electricity for nearly 10 million customers in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

The [Clean Up TVA coalition](#) is committed to transforming TVA into a green utility by shutting down coal plants, preventing new fossil gas development, and accelerating a just transition to fossil fuel-free, distributed renewable, affordable and democratic energy for all communities and workers in the Tennessee Valley.

[Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light](#) is the state affiliate of a network of faith communities working across the United States, offering a spiritual response to climate change. Our mutual efforts will protect our climate through upholding the sacredness of life, defending those most vulnerable to the many impacts of climate change, and advocating for effective climate protection policies.

[Zero Hour](#) is a global youth-led climate justice organization based in the US creating entry points, training, and resources for young activists and organizers wanting to take bold action to achieve climate justice. Together, we are a movement of unstoppable youth organizing to protect our right to natural resources and a clean, safe, and healthy environment that will ensure a livable future where we not just survive, but flourish.

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person’s right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, [visit www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).