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For Immediate Release

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Governor Northam Uses Loophole to Hide Documents in Responses to FOIAs on Air and Water Boards, Meeting with Dominion

In response to requests for documents about meetings and deliberations that may relate to Dominion Energy's proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline, the Governor's office has supplied some records but has withheld crucial information. When faced with a choice between open government and concealment, Governor Northam made the wrong choice, relying on state law provisions that allow but do not require him to shield certain public information from the people of Virginia.

We are disappointed that the Governor has refused to release all the records we requested. The result is that, while we have acquired some information, those documents do not answer vital questions that many Virginians are asking:

Did Governor Northam manipulate the process for Air Board appointments to influence the upcoming decision on Dominion's proposed Buckingham compressor station for the ACP?

Did Governor Northam discuss the ACP and Air Board appointments in a private meeting with Dominion officials on November 19, when a public furor over the changes in Air Board membership was raging?

As we stated in our requests, while we anticipated that the administration may claim exemptions provided in the statute, we hoped they would choose to let the public see the records. Statements from the Northam administration about the Air Board personnel changes have been met with widespread public scepticism (See: [Northam's struggle to explain air board move suggests it's exactly what it appears to be](#), Virginia Mercury, December 5, 2018; ['Ugly episode:' Northam allies slam his decision to alter board before Dominion vote](#), Washington Post, November 27, 2018; [Northam can seek independent voices, or mere rubber stamps, for his boards](#), The Virginian-Pilot, November 23, 2018).

If assertions provided by administration spokespersons are true, the Governor could only benefit from a full public airing of the records. His hesitancy to do so can only contribute to Virginian's doubts and taint the regulatory process for the ACP.

Wild Virginia's blog post at [describes](#) the records that we did acquire from the Governor and provides links so all can read and judge the sufficiency of the Governor's responses for themselves.

We believe the circumstances surrounding the Air Pollution Control Board appointments continue to create a question whether principles of due process have been breached for the Buckingham compressor station permit. We hoped the Governor would remove this cloud of doubt.

Wild Virginia calls on the Governor to correct this problem and we call on our members across Virginia and our allies to continue to call for Rubin and Bleicher to be allowed to vote at next week's Air Board hearing. The people of Union Hill and all Virginian's are depending on a fair process and this action can help ensure it.

Wild Virginia is a non-profit organization with members from across Virginia. Our mission is to protect and connect Virginia's wild places.