

WHY EVERYTHING MANCHIN SAYS ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE IS WRONG

DESPITE JOE MANCHIN'S CLAIMS, THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE WILL WRECK THE CLIMATE AND HARM COMMUNITIES WITHOUT HELPING EUROPE OR THE UNITED STATES

Senator Joe Manchin wants to ease completion of the fracked gas Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), as part of the dangerous fossil fuel “side deal” he’s demanding in exchange for his support of the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act.¹ The pipeline is already years behind schedule and billions over budget, lacks multiple key permits, and faces several lawsuits and federal reviews challenging its construction. Manchin and his fossil fuel industry donors² have made a host of bogus claims about MVP in an attempt to force the pipeline to completion in an effort that will trample communities, endanger climate commitments, and undermine environmental law.

MYTH #1: MVP WILL FREE UP GAS THAT CAN THEN BE EXPORTED TO EUROPE

Manchin and other West Virginia members of Congress recently claimed: “*While MVP would not deliver natural gas directly to an export terminal, completion of the pipeline*

will certainly help to meet increasing domestic demand for natural gas and unlock other supplies of natural gas to send to our allies.”³

FACT: Liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal capacity is the limiting factor in the United States’ ability to export gas, not lack of pipelines or lack of gas.⁴ Expanding existing terminals or building new ones will take several years.⁵ Although Europe is looking for gas in the short-term to wean itself from Russian supply, its five-year plan calls for dramatically slashing gas demand.⁶ This means that even if the United States builds new export capacity, it will arrive far too late to help European allies.⁷

MYTH #2: THE UNITED STATES — AND THE SOUTHEAST IN PARTICULAR — NEED MORE GAS

While Manchin cites “increasing domestic demand for natural gas,” MVP operators stated to the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission (FERC) that the project is expected to displace coal in the southeastern United States: “*Coal-fired electric generation will be replaced by a combination of natural gas and renewable generation. (...) it is expected that replacing coal-fired electric generation will be higher in the southeast.*”⁸

FACT: Gas demand in the Southeast, the region MVP would serve, is already well supplied by existing pipelines.⁹ Further, **gas demand in the region is expected to fall by at least 7% from 2019-2030.**¹⁰ Nationally, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) — which has a long history of underestimating renewables growth¹¹ — expects gas consumption to fall 2% between 2022 and 2023.¹² The EIA says increasing renewable energy generation in the coming years will displace gas (and coal) consumption in the power sector,¹³ busting the myth that gas is the primary way to displace coal from our power system.

1 Alexia Beyer, “Mountain State Spotlight explains: Why does the Mountain Valley Pipeline need Joe Manchin to change the law?” *Mountain State Spotlight*, 8-15-22. [Link]

2 Hiroko Tabuchi, “Manchin’s Donors Include Pipeline Giants That Win in His Climate Deal,” *New York Times*, 8-7-22. [Link]

3 Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, “Manchin, Capito, McKinley, Miller Urge FERC To Approve Mountain Valley Pipeline’s Extension Request,” 7-20-22. [Link]

4 Clifford Kraus, “Why the U.S. Can’t Quickly Wean Europe From Russian Gas,” *New York Times*, 3-25-22. [Link]

5 Robert Rozansky, “How Long Does it Take to Build an LNG Export Terminal in the United States?” *Global Energy Monitor*, Apr. 2022. [Link]

6 European Commission, “REPowerEU, affordable, secure, and sustainable energy for Europe,” accessed 8-29-22. [Link]

7 Euan Graham, Kamila Godzinska, “Future of EU gas demand,” *E3G*, 4-8-22. [Link]

8 MVP FERC Certificate Application. (Page 13 of PDF). [Link]

9 Comments of Friends of the Central Shenandoah under FERC Docket CP21-57. [Link]

10 Ibid. (Citing EIA). [Link]

11 Michael Grunwald, “Why are the government’s energy forecasts so bad?” *Politico*, 6-24-15. [Link]

12 EIA, “Short-Term Energy Outlook,” 8-9-22. [Link]

13 EIA, “New Renewable Power Plants Are Reducing U.S. Electricity Generation From Natural Gas,” 1-18-22. [Link]

MYTH #3: MVP WILL HELP REDUCE U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Manchin has also pitched the MVP as a solution to the climate crisis. He recently released a statement claiming: *"I continue to call for the full approval of the MVP so we are able to domestically produce the natural gas we need today and support our energy and climate goals for decades to come..."*¹⁴

FACT: If MVP is completed, it would add tens of millions of tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution to the atmosphere every year for decades to come.¹⁵ These emissions would come from pipeline operations, methane gas leakage, and end users burning the pipeline's gas. The United States has pledged to reduce GHG emissions at least 50% from 2005 levels by 2030.¹⁶ Manchin and MVP's owners try to resolve this contradiction by assuming the pipeline will help the Southeast replace coal-fired power with gas-fired power, ignoring the fact that cheap, clean

renewable energy is increasingly displacing coal and gas.¹⁷ But even taking this assumption at face value doesn't add up.

Assuming MVP would cause coal plant closures, the pipeline would have to substantially displace coal emissions over and above the emissions it causes. In fact, to align with U.S. climate goals it would need to trigger a 40% reduction in emissions by 2030. We calculate that **MVP would have to displace at least 20 coal-fired power plants in the Southeast by 2030 to align with U.S. climate goals. That's equal to all the remaining coal plants in Virginia and North Carolina.**

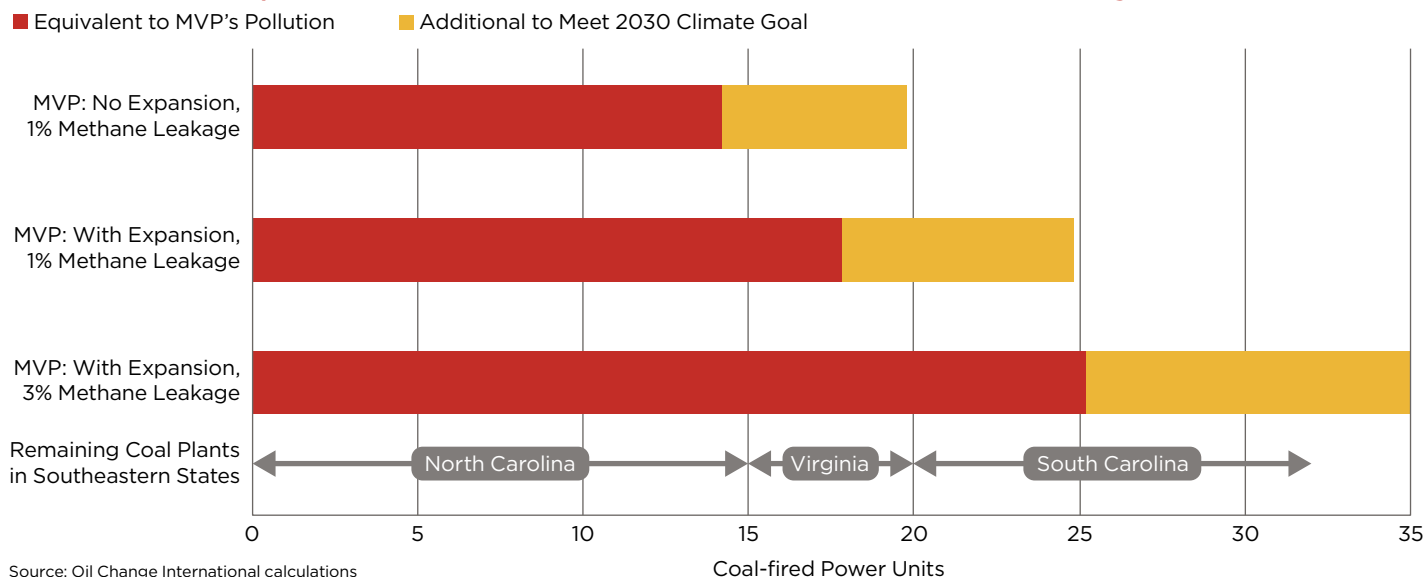
MVP's operators ultimately plan to expand the pipeline's capacity — and thus its emissions — by 25%.¹⁸ This means MVP would need to replace 25 coal plants by 2030.

However, these figures assume a very conservative methane leakage rate (1%). Experts do not agree on the rate

of methane leakage in the oil and gas industry;¹⁹ recent studies put it anywhere from about 1-3%.²⁰ At a 3% methane leakage rate and with its planned expansion, **MVP would need to eliminate 35 coal-fired power plants in the Southeast by 2030. That's more than all the remaining coal plants in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.** That's a tall order for one pipeline.

The facts speak for themselves. MVP will not enable U.S. LNG exporters to export more gas to Europe. MVP is not needed in the Southeast. MVP will increase GHG emissions and make it harder to reach our climate targets. MVP is a false solution looking for a problem. It's out of date and out of time. Communities along the pipeline route, together with climate champions across the United States, are urging Congress to stop MVP and reject Manchin's dangerous side deal.

MVP Would Need to Displace Most or All Coal-Fired Power Plants in Its Service Area Within 7 Years to Align With U.S. Climate Goals



Source: Oil Change International calculations
Go to: <http://priceofoil.org/mvp-calculations>

14 Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, "Manchin Statement On FERC's Mountain Valley Pipeline Order," 4-8-22. [Link]
15 Oil Change International. "The Mountain Valley Pipeline: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Briefing," Feb. 2017. [Link]
16 The White House. "President Biden Sets 2030 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Target Aimed at Creating Good-Paying Union Jobs and Securing U.S. Leadership on Clean Energy Technologies," 4-22-21. [Link]
17 EIA, "New Renewable Power Plants Are Reducing U.S. Electricity Generation From Natural Gas," 1-18-22. [Link]
18 Paul J. Gough, "Equitrans plans capacity expansion on Mountain Valley Pipeline," *Pittsburgh Business Times*, 8-4-20. [Link]
19 Josh Saul & Naureen Malik, "As Gas Prices Soar, Nobody Knows How Much Methane is Leaking," *Bloomberg*, 5-3-22. [Link]
20 Michanowicz et al. "Methane and Health-Damaging Air Pollutants From the Oil and Gas Sector: Bridging 10 Years of Scientific Understanding," *PSE Healthy Energy*, 10-6-21. [Link]



Oil Change International is a research organization focused on exposing the true costs of fossil fuels and facilitating the ongoing transition towards clean energy.

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