

Re: [EXTERNAL] Press inquiry on March 2 from Energywire for Fish and Wildlife Service

Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>

Fri 3/3/2023 9:30 AM

To: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>; Interior Press <interior_press@ios.doi.gov>; Schroeder, Darin C <darin_schroeder@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: Marshall, Laury <Laury_Marshall@fws.gov>; Wainman, Barbara W <barbara_wainman@fws.gov>

For starters, you might correct the bureau. But hasn't the deadline been extended twice? Worth point out off the record?

Melissa Schwartz (she/her)
Communications Director
Office of the Secretary
Department of the Interior

From: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>

Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 9:25:57 AM

To: Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>; Interior Press <interior_press@ios.doi.gov>; Schroeder, Darin C <darin_schroeder@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: Marshall, Laury <Laury_Marshall@fws.gov>; Wainman, Barbara W <barbara_wainman@fws.gov>

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Press inquiry on March 2 from Energywire for Fish and Wildlife Service

FYI, we received the following inquiry and my response will be no comment on this.

Karen

Karen Armstrong
Chief, HQ Division of Public Affairs - Office of Communications
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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From: Carlos Anchondo <canchondo@eenews.net>

Sent: Thursday, March 2, 2023 6:44 PM

To: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>; Public Affairs, FWHQ <publicaffairs@fws.gov>; Schulz, Cindy <cindy_schulz@fws.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Press inquiry on March 2 from Energywire for Fish and Wildlife Service

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Good morning, Karen and Cindy,

Carlos here with E&E News.

After the biological opinion for the Mountain Valley pipeline project was issued on Tuesday, Feb. 28, and posted Wednesday, March 1, multiple groups have issued statements noting that the Fish and Wildlife Service had 45 days available from the end of formal consultation to issue the biological opinion.

Here is the group Wild Virginia:

- "Rather than use the time available to do the thorough review required, the Service rushed the decision, issuing it on the very day that formal consultation ended," stated Wild Virginia's Conservation Director, David Sligh.

Here is the Sierra Club:

- "In their decision process, the FWS was hasty to put out a new opinion that didn't consider comments from the public."

I would like to know:

- Why didn't the Forest Service use those 45 days to review the comments that were received from petitioners?
- Why did the Forest Service decide to issue the biological opinion on Feb. 28?
- Would the Forest Service like to respond to claims from environmental groups that the Forest Service rushed this decision?

Many thanks,
Carlos Anchondo
Energywire
E&E News
(512) 577-9051