

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

Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>

Fri 3/3/2023 10:20 AM

To: Shannon, Keith <Keith_Shannon@fws.gov>; Simon, Spencer <spencer_simon@fws.gov>; Schulz, Cindy <cindy_schulz@fws.gov>; Public Affairs, FWHQ <publicaffairs@fws.gov>

Cc: Bossie, Susan (Amanda) <Susan.Bossie@sol.doi.gov>; Marino, Sharon <sharon_marino@fws.gov>

I don't think we should have an official comment but could we say something off the record about the 45 days and that it was extended (however many times)?

FYI, I've been in coordination with DOI OCO on this and they are open to the off the record approach.

Karen Armstrong

Chief, HQ Division of Public Affairs - Office of Communications

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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From: Shannon, Keith <Keith_Shannon@fws.gov>

Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 9:56 AM

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

Cc: Bossie, Susan (Amanda) <Susan.Bossie@sol.doi.gov>; Marino, Sharon <sharon_marino@fws.gov>

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

Thank you, Spencer. To clarify, is the recommendation not to reply to any of Carlos's questions or is there room to craft a response about *how* we used the full statutory time and the need to request additional time?

From: Simon, Spencer <spencer_simon@fws.gov>

Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 8:06 AM

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

Cc: Bossie, Susan (Amanda) <Susan.Bossie@sol.doi.gov>; Marino, Sharon <sharon_marino@fws.gov>

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Atty/Client Privilege

The groups clearly are uninformed. Not only did we use the full statutory time allotted, we requested additional time. Further, section 7 is not a public process, there is no statutory public comment period like there is in NEPA.

Spencer Simon
Deputy Assistant Regional Director - Ecological Services
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From: Schulz, Cindy <cindy_schulz@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 7:27 AM
To: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>; Public Affairs, FWHQ <publicaffairs@fws.gov>; Shannon, Keith <Keith_Shannon@fws.gov>
Cc: Bossie, Susan (Amanda) <Susan.Bossie@sol.doi.gov>; Simon, Spencer <spencer_simon@fws.gov>; Marino, Sharon <sharon_marino@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Press inquiry on March 2 from Energywire for Fish and Wildlife Service

Please see inquiry below.

Cindy Schulz
Field Office Supervisor
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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From: Carlos Anchondo <canchondo@eenews.net>
Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 6:57 AM
To: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>; Public Affairs, FWHQ <publicaffairs@fws.gov>; Schulz, Cindy <cindy_schulz@fws.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Press inquiry on March 2 from Energywire for Fish and Wildlife Service

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My apologies for using Forest Service — I meant Fish and Wildlife Service in these questions.

Thank you.

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From: Carlos Anchondo
Sent: Thursday, March 2, 2023 6:44:43 PM

To: Armstrong, Karen <karen_armstrong@fws.gov>; publicaffairs@fws.gov <publicaffairs@fws.gov>; cindy_schulz@fws.gov <cindy_schulz@fws.gov>

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

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