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More than fifty Appalachian groups call on Department of Energy to suspend ARCH2 plans *Signatories demand transparency following community concerns raised at listening sessions*

APPALACHIA – The Ohio River Valley Institute delivered a letter to the US Department of Energy (DOE) on behalf of fifty four Appalachian organizations and community groups today calling for the suspension of the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2), citing an extreme lack of transparency and meaningful community engagement during project negotiations.

The letter attests that the DOE has failed to establish the conditions necessary for the “deep partnership” promised by the department and that, without urgent corrective measures, the department’s actions will increase the pollution burdens and environmental injustice already experienced by many Appalachian communities.

Groups called on the Department of Energy to:

- Disclose information relevant to ARCH2, including site locations and operational details for proposed projects, plans for carbon storage and transportation infrastructure, documentation regarding the department’s assessment of the track records of developers associated with ARCH2, and more.
- Work with community and environmental justice stakeholders to design an engagement structure that gives communities real decision-making during negotiations, planning, construction, and operation.
- Suspend negotiations with ARCH2 until these conditions can be met.

An uproar of health, safety, economic, and procedural concerns dominated DOE’s ARCH2 listening session in March and a follow up overflow session in May. All but two of the nearly forty speakers opposed the project, calling the hub an “energy industry experiment” posing “a host of harms.” Many decried DOE’s fault-riddled outreach process and its failure to grapple with ARCH2’s negative impacts. The DOE has consistently pointed to engagement in the future despite the fact that most decisions about ARCH2 will be made during current negotiations. Almost every speaker signed the letter calling for project suspension.

“When announcing the hydrogen hubs, the department called this effort 'a critical arm of America's future clean energy economy,’” **said Tom Torres, Hydrogen Campaign Coordinator**

with the Ohio River Valley Institute and author of the letter. “Instead, federal officials have consigned Appalachia to its fossil fuel present by withholding critical details from the public and foreclosing on all opportunities for communities to shape the most significant decisions regarding this project.”

“In the Ohio River Valley, we are concerned about the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub and there are many open questions about even the most basic details regarding the hub,” **said Jill Hunkler, Executive Director of Ohio Valley Allies.** “Impacted communities deserve to be informed and have their voices included in the negotiation phase. How can we take this process seriously when the DOE has yet to answer the questions presented to them by concerned citizens in our region?”

“This administration has repeatedly expressed a commitment to environmental justice, which involves open provision of detailed and timely information, public transparency of DOE’s engagements with industry, and ongoing, meaningful dialogue and engagement with the public. DOE has so far failed to live up to these standards and expectations and this must be corrected immediately,” **said Eric Engle, Board Chair of Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action.**

“The Biden-Harris Administration is stripping communities of their right to be at the decision-making table,” **said Sarah Martik, Executive Director of the Center for Coalfield Justice.** “Unless they provide communities with the information they need to truly assess the costs of this hub, their commitments to environmental justice are nothing more than performance.”

“The DOE’s emphasis on community benefits ignores the health and pollution burdens associated with ARCH2 and its dependence on shale gas,” **said Alison L. Steele, Executive Director of the Environmental Health Project.** “Accurately assessing the impacts and risks of this hub will require detailed, publicly available plans. We call on federal officials to release all relevant information residents need to properly evaluate what this project will mean for Appalachian communities.”

“Federal regulators are set to subsidize billions in new fossil fuel infrastructure and unproven technologies but little attention has been paid to the health and safety implications of the production, transportation, and storage of hydrogen and carbon dioxide,” **said Matt Kelso, Manager of Data & Technology at FracTracker Alliance.** “The DOE’s lack of transparency leaves the Appalachian communities that will disproportionately bear the risks of this project completely in the dark.”

Click [here](#) to view the letter and a list of signatory organizations.

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