



April 13, 2022

Andrew Ritter Jr.
Range Resources – Appalachia, LLC
3000 Town Center Blvd.
Canonsburg, PA 15317

Via E-Filing: <https://efiling.puc.pa.gov>

Re: Range Resources – Appalachia, LLC’s Comments to PA PUC Rulemaking Regarding Hazardous Liquid Public Utility Safety Standards at 52 Pa. Code Chapter 59 (Docket L-2019-3010267)

Dear Secretary Chiavetta,

Please accept the following comments on behalf of Range Resources – Appalachia, LLC (Range) as public comment on the above referenced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR).

Range is a leading natural gas producer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a top 10 U.S. producer of natural gas and natural gas liquids (NGLs). Range is currently a shipper of NGLs on pipeline facilities which would be subject to the NOPR. Range submits the comments herein from this perspective.

It is Range’s continual goal to operate in a safe, responsible manner. In sum, safety is a top priority and core value at Range. Therefore, we fully appreciate the PUC’s continued commitment to safety – however, as noted below, the NOPR, as currently drafted, creates uncertainty, and thereby would lead to confusion rather than safety improvements for pipeline operations. Moreover, the NOPR will add unnecessary costs across the energy supply chain and ultimately to consumers at a time when citizens are already dealing with significant inflation due to several local and global factors.

The oil and gas industry operates under strong regulatory oversight. In a general sense, we are supportive of strong and consistent regulatory oversight of the oil and gas industry, but continued efforts to further regulate the industry at all levels of government often creates uncertainty, inconsistency, and confusion. Clarity and certainty in regulatory oversight only serves to *enhance* regulatory compliance – thereby enhancing environmental protection and public safety. Unfortunately, the NOPR would create uncertainty and confusion in the regulatory oversight of the oil and gas industry.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) currently provides for regulations to ensure pipeline safety. Pipeline safety is not served if the Commission establishes state regulations in conflict with existing or new federal regulations. The NOPR would add a new layer of regulation in Pennsylvania inconsistent with PHMSA regulations. This inconsistency and the confusion it may cause will strain regulatory compliance and therefore the



environmental protection and public safety goals it portends to advance. The PUC should re-examine the current requirements of and recent changes to federal PHMSA regulations before proceeding with the NOPR.

Not only is the NOPR inconsistent with Federal pipeline safety laws, but it is also inconsistent with Pennsylvania law. It is only proper for regulations to be consistent with and adhere to the duly enacted laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, the NOPR does not conform to the authority granted to the PUC pursuant to the Gas and Hazardous Liquids Pipelines Act which reads, in part:

“The commission [the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission] may adopt regulations, consistent with the Federal pipeline safety laws, as may be necessary or proper in the exercise of its powers and perform its duties under this act. The regulations shall not be inconsistent with or greater or more stringent than the minimum standards and regulations adopted under the Federal pipeline safety law.¹”

In this case, existing statute speaks clearly to the authority of the PUC in a manner specific to “pipeline safety laws.” Despite this clear statutory direction, the NOPR proposes regulations that are both inconsistent with and greater than the standards set by Federal pipeline safety laws. The NOPR therefore should not proceed in its current form.

The NOPR also potentially has significant economic impact on the oil and gas industry – with some industry estimates approaching a multi-billion-dollar cost imposition. While the NOPR provides safety standards for operators of pipeline and transmission systems, the economic impact of the NOPR could easily extend to other entities in the oil and gas supply chain, including natural gas production companies such as Range. At a time of rising energy costs, these additional costs would be of consequence to natural gas producers, natural gas processors, natural gas shippers, and ultimately natural gas consumers. A full cost economic analysis should be conducted on the NOPR before further advancing the rulemaking.

Implementation of the NOPR would raise fuel costs for consumers, create community and infrastructure disturbances, disrupt service, and reduce consumer access to fuel and natural gas liquids at a time when supply chain challenges are already being felt by consumers. The PUC must balance this impact on reliability and the needs of consumers – key tenets of the mission of the PUC² – in advancing the NOPR.

¹ Gas and Hazardous Liquids Pipeline Act, §501 (P.L586, No.127, 2011)

² “The mission of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission is to balance the needs of consumers and utilities; ensure safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protect the public interest; educate consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; further economic development; and foster new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.” (www.puc.pa.gov, April 5, 2022)



Like the PUC, Range is fully committed to the safe production, transport, and ultimate delivery of natural gas and natural gas liquids we produce. We submit these comments in support of the espoused goal of improved safety, but with great concern about the economic, reliability and consumer impacts of the NOPR and the regulatory uncertainty and confusion it may cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Ritter Jr.', is positioned above the typed name.

Andrew Ritter Jr., Vice-President
Legislative & Regulatory Affairs