



AppalachianVoices

How to Write & Publish a Letter to the Editor

Why write an LTE and why are they so important?

“Letters to the Editor” –or “LTEs”– are a fantastic way to advocate for an issue - from anywhere, at any time! A LTE published in a print or online newspaper can help reach new audiences who might not know about the issue you discuss and may make them want to learn more. A LTE can help correct false information, and gives you the chance to frame your advocacy issue in a factual, personalized way. LTEs are easy to share online and can help influence newspapers to increase their coverage of the issue. Importantly, LTEs can give readers a way to learn about and potentially advocate for an issue, as should always offer a “next step” for the audience.

The Basics of a letter to the editor:

- What** - a letter of 200-500 words in length, responding to important issues, news coverage and existing opinion pieces
- Why** - brings information to new audiences, correcting false narratives, increasing coverage by publications of issues about which you care
- How** - submission via email or online form, for both print and digital publication
- When** - submissions can be sent at any time in response to related coverage
Some publications have a hiatus after publication

What makes a good LTE?

Follow the guidelines: Check the paper’s rules for word count and submission method to be considered for publication as each paper is different! It can be helpful to share your letter draft with someone else ahead of time for feedback, or for assistance editing for length.

Be concise: Stick to a few main points you’d like to make - you don’t have to cover every facet of the issue. Consider making 2-3 persuasive points you want to stick in the mind of your reader.

Make it fact-based: LTEs are great to counter false data and information. Make sure you can find sources for the information you include, as some publications may ask for those.

Make it timely and related to the paper’s content: Respond to an article or opinion piece as quickly as possible, preferably within 3 days, to increase your chance of publication. You are more likely to be published if you respond to previous coverage in the paper – but you can always creatively link your issue to related coverage!

Connect to local issues: Think about the audience for your paper and what local issues the readers may already know and care about. You can talk about a global or regional issue, but connect it to what’s going on where you live.

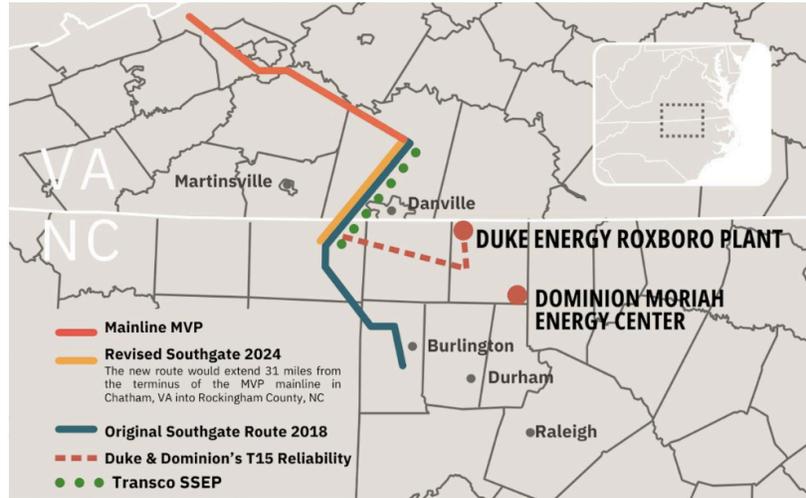
Root your letter in the personal: Facts can be important for your argument, but no one else has your lived personal experience and perspective. Consider weaving that into your letter.

Include an “ask” or next step for the reader to take: Your letter is like a conversation with a reader that should keep going! Mention a method of advocacy the reader can take (attend an upcoming meeting, call your elected officials, etc).

Want LTE help or to attend a Letter-to-the-Editor training? Contact juhi@appvoices.org



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Specifics of the T15 Reliability Project:

- T15 is a proposed 45-mile methane gas pipeline that would run from Eden to Roxboro
- T15 would transport gas from the Transcontinental (Transco) pipeline to Duke Energy's two proposed methane gas power plants at Hyco Lake in Person County.
 - For more information on Transco, visit www.nossep.org/no-ssep
- T15 is also likely to be linked to yet another proposed pipeline, the Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate Project, which—if built—would end in Eden.

The project's estimated timeline:

- 2024-2025: Permitting
- 2025: Design, procurement, and construction of an 8-mile segment ending in Roxboro
- 2026-2027: Construction of the remaining 37 miles of the pipeline
- End of 2027: Proposed start of service

Visit www.nossep.org/no-t15 for more info

Suggested talking points to include in your Letter to the Editor:

- T15 Reliability Project is indicative of the overbuilding of fossil fuel infrastructure in the Southeast and could impact some of the same waterways and properties as the proposed Mountain Valley Southgate pipeline.
- New fossil fuel infrastructure locks us into outdated, polluting technology.
- It is healthier and more economical to source our power from clean, renewable energy, especially as solar and wind power are increasingly available.
- Methane gas is a potent greenhouse gas, and the pipelines contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, worsening the climate crisis.
- Leaks from methane gas pipelines can impact our air, water and soil, and pollution from methane gas can contribute to health problems such as respiratory illnesses.
- Gas compressor stations release toxic air pollutants, causing a risk of increased respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological diseases.
- Local communities would not receive the gas from the new pipeline.
- Eminent domain seizure can be used to take your land without your permission.
- Pipelines decrease property values.

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