

THE WEATHER

Tuesday-Sunny and warmer with a high in the low 60s.

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Blue Ridge Project

Interior Lawyer Should Not Represent EPA, Alleghany Farm Bureau Contends

An effort is being made to prevent the Department of Interior Field Solicitor, Curtis Bell, from representing the Environmental Protection Agency in the Blue Ridge case now pending before the Federal Power Commission.

The Alleghany Farm Bureau and the North Carolina Farm Bureau, supported by the Counties of Alleghany and Ashe, filed a motion last week, asking that Bell not be allowed to serve as counsel for the EPA.

Bell, as field solicitor for the Department of Interior, has "championed" the idea of water quality storage in the project

to be used to alleviate the pollution problem in the Kanawha River at Charleston. Interior has insisted on the huge storage requirement in the face of West Virginia's position that the water is not needed; that it would be harmful, and that the pollutants should be prevented at their source.

The brief seeking to prevent Bell from acting as counsel for the EPA as well as the Department of Interior was filed by Sparta Attorney Arnold Young, the Farm Bureau's counsel.

A supporting document was filed by Attorney Edmund I. Adams, representing Alle-

ghany and Ashe Counties.

Interior, through Attorney Bell, has recommended Appalachian Power's request for the Blue Ridge license be granted, but that the 650,000 acre feet provision be retained.

West Virginia's Attorney General Browning has threatened a lawsuit to prevent the discharge of excessive amounts of water as envisioned by Interior to flush the pollution in the Charleston area.

The Federal Power Commission's staff last week recommended approval of the license, but stipulated the storage should be reduced to 250,000 acre feet.

The Farm Bureau's brief cited the legislation under which the EPA was set up, giving it a mandate to eliminate damage to environment.

The brief contends EPA "has shirked its responsibility by subjugating its entire responsibility to another agency which does not have the same mandate. The Environmental Protection Agency was not created as a subagency of the Department of Interior and its entry into this case should not and must not be characterized by merger with Interior."

The brief continues:
"The comprehensive development of the

Blue Ridge Project requires keen insight into all the problems concerning the environment both in the project area and down river.

"This insight, by reason of the Congressional Mandate, must come from the Environmental Protection Agency and not be just a glossed-over version of Interior's contentions. Interior's brief and environmental statement held fast to its already stated views on water quality storage and said little about the other factors.

"It should be noted in passing that former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall has recently commented in a syndicated news-

paper feature story that Interior's position on water quality storage is wrong and that these views should be corrected by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"For all these reasons we feel compelled to speak out against the shocking duplicity in representation in this matter. Both ethics and the orderly administration of justice require that Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Interior not be represented by the same attorney."

Attorney Adams, in his brief, said Ashe and Alleghany Counties join the Farm Bureau "in its strenuous objection to this arrangement."