

14. **In response to question 16, AES notes that there will be some permanent conversion of forested nontidal wetlands to scrub-shrub or emergent nontidal wetlands. MDE regulates any proposed alteration of a nontidal wetland; therefore, conversion impacts along the pipeline route must be quantified and mitigation for these impacts will be required.**

Response:

AES notes that there will be no permanent fill or net loss of wetland acreage as a result of the construction and operation of the Project. However, there will be a limited amount of cover conversion in forested wetlands where full size trees will not be permitted to grow back in the permanently maintained Pipeline right-of-way. Industry standard practice is to restore grade, drainage, and topsoil conditions and allow natural successional processes to restore the cover to an emergent to scrub-shrub condition. As trees reach a height of over 15 feet, they are selectively removed from the zone within 15 feet of the Pipeline centerline. This stated, AES proposes to work in conjunction with the MDE to develop appropriate mitigation to offset the limited impact to forested wetland functions and values that will occur as a result of the Pipeline.