

January 26, 2023

Dr. Homer Wilkes, Under Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
c/o Jefferson National Forest
MVP Project
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019

RE: Supplemental EIS No. 50036

Dear Dr. Wilkes:

On behalf of Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA), I write to share our strong support for Mountain Valley Pipeline's (MVP) plans for crossing 3.5 miles of the Jefferson National Forest.

Founded in 2006, CEA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for balanced energy and environmental policies and responsible access to resources. CEA represents virtually every sector of the U.S. economy – from the iron and steel industry to truckers, airlines, agriculture, labor organizations, restaurants, chemical manufacturers, small businesses, and families across the nation – that are concerned about U.S. energy policies, energy security, and long-term price and supply stability. CEA has more than 550,000 individual members and almost 400 academic, non-profit, corporate, and union affiliates throughout the United States.

Our members support a rational, all-of-the-above energy policy that utilizes all our domestic natural resources – both traditional and renewable – while ensuring commonsense environmental protections are in place. Therefore, we support investments in critical energy infrastructure like the MVP project.

It is well documented that the MVP project would provide billions in economic development for the states of Virginia and West Virginia while meeting the region's growing energy needs. At a time when our country is struggling with inflation, energy uncertainty and an economic downturn, good economic projects like this are needed more than ever. The MVP, which was authorized to start construction in 2018, has been — like so many other much-needed energy and industrial projects – delayed by a litany of litigation and regulatory delays.

Total project work on the MVP is nearly 94 percent complete, with all aboveground facilities ready to start service. More than half of the project's right of way has already been fully restored. Finishing this work and bringing the project into operation is vital for landowners along the route, the environment, and our economic and energy security.

After the Fourth Circuit's ruling last year to vacate and remand permitting decisions by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, the agencies have responded by diligently reviewing the project and issues raised by the court. Mountain Valley has prepared highly detailed and comprehensive plans for its work in the forest, and it is clear that this work can be performed in a way that appropriately balances the need to meet public demand for energy while protecting our natural resources.

Furthermore, the MVP will deliver energy that meets the most stringent environmental standards, continuing ongoing efforts that make the U.S. the leading steward of emission reductions in the world. Once in service, this project would be monitored with 24/7 state-of-the-art safety technology.

As a cleaner energy choice and the nation's most used energy source for power generation, natural gas is helping drive lower emissions and better air quality in Virginia and across this country. A recent CEA analysis found that from 2000 to 2020, Virginia's natural gas consumption for power generation increased more than tenfold, yet carbon dioxide emissions declined by more than 20 percent. This report also found substantial decreases in other air pollutants as natural gas use and pipeline development expanded over that time period.

Recent events, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have only highlighted the importance of the MVP project to meet domestic demand for clean natural gas. The MVP project remains fully subscribed with customers that need service, including the local gas utility in Roanoke where regional demand has increased by more than 15 percent since 2000. Additionally, this project would provide an estimated \$45 million in annual local tax benefits for communities in Virginia and West Virginia hit hard by the economic damage of COVID-19 and the current downturn.

We urge the Forest Service to issue the appropriate approvals for the MVP project. Our country needs vital pipelines like this to strengthen our national economy, put people back to work, and help us get back on track.

Sincerely,



Chris Ventura
Executive Director, Midwest