



January 23, 2023

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

Subject: Mountain Valley Pipeline, Equitrans Expansion Project – Supplemental EIS #50036

Dear Dr. Wilkes:

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce is the region's leading advocate for economic development and business, and we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on Mountain Valley Pipeline's permit application for work within the Jefferson National Forest.

The positive economic impact of the project's construction in Southwest Virginia has been undeniable, with workers contributing to local economies by spending money on lodging and restaurants and as patrons of other retail and commercial businesses. Our region stands to receive long-term benefits that depend on the project entering service. Natural gas is the fuel source preferred by many large employers, and reliable and affordable access to it is essential for our region's long-term economic future. The local natural gas distribution company, Roanoke Gas Co., will draw natural gas from two taps on the MVP for local use. One of these taps will be at Franklin County's Summit View Business Park, which currently has no access to natural gas without MVP.

Once operational, the pipeline will generate new annual tax revenue that can be used by localities to support core services, including education, public safety and transportation. This is especially important as local governments deal with budgetary constraints and challenges related to the after-effects of the pandemic, inflation and the current economic downturn. For example, Roanoke County would realize more than \$1 million in new ad valorem tax revenue every year from the pipeline.

We all want the Mountain Valley Pipeline to be built in a manner that respects and protects our natural resources while meeting our region's energy needs. Most of the project is already complete, but some sections, including a 3.5-mile section in the Jefferson National Forest and certain sections in the Roanoke Valley, still need to be finished. The company's plans have been repeatedly and thoroughly scrutinized, and it is appropriate for MVP to resume construction that is held to a high standard and under close regulatory oversight. The sooner that work on this project is completed, the sooner Mountain Valley can finish fully restoring the project right-of-way. Then the pipeline will operate out of sight and out of mind, like the thousands of miles of other natural gas pipeline safely operating throughout this region and Commonwealth.

In conclusion, we continue to support the construction and operation of the MVP project and respectfully request the U.S. Forest Service issue the necessary permit for Mountain Valley to complete its work and bring the project into service for the benefit of the Roanoke Valley and surrounding region.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Sichau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "E" and a prominent loop at the end.

Eric Sichau
President and CEO
Roanoke Regional Chamber