

January 25, 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 and the Equitrans Expansion Project (Supplemental EIS #50036)

Dear Dr. Wilkes:

On behalf of the NC Chamber and the statewide business community, I am writing to express our strong support for the Mountain Valley Pipeline project and its requested permit to perform construction activities in a very limited area of the Jefferson National Forest.

As North Carolina's leading, nonpartisan business advocacy organization, we believe that maintaining a clean environment, adequate infrastructure and reliable access to affordable energy are essential to ensuring the state is a leading place in the world to do business. Our state is projected to outgrow our natural gas supply as soon as this year, and our state's economic success and residential housing capacity depends on securing additional supplies, which the MVP is designed to provide through a separate project, MVP Southgate.

North Carolina's access to natural gas is more vulnerable than our access to gasoline. Any disruption to existing supply is likely to result in dire consequences – perhaps even more disruptive than those we experienced in 2021 in the aftermath of the cyberattack on the Colonial Pipeline. This is because our entire natural gas supply flows to us by way of the Transco Pipeline. A catastrophic shutdown of this single pipeline would almost immediately disrupt the flow of this vital energy resource to the utilities serving end users for North Carolina.

To be clear, Transco has an excellent record of operation. But if some unforeseen event did interrupt its flow, the impacts would be felt instantly – not gradually, like the effects of the Colonial Pipeline shutdown. Local economies would sputter to a stop, jobs would be impacted, and an immeasurable degree of economic opportunity would be lost. A natural gas supply disruption could become critical, especially during an extreme weather event. For these reasons and others, utility and regulatory experts in North Carolina have repeatedly and consistently expressed the need for more natural gas supplies and natural gas pipeline infrastructure.

In 2021, state lawmakers approved landmark legislation that charts a path to a lower-carbon, energy-secure future in North Carolina. Public electric utilities in our state could quickly, cost effectively and dramatically reduce carbon emissions by using natural gas to supplant coal for electricity generation. Natural gas also makes a perfect dispatchable complement to renewables like solar to maintain a reliable flow of energy moving across our grid in all seasons and at all hours of the day.

Millions of North Carolinians rely on natural gas to heat their homes and businesses and to generate affordable, on-demand electricity that powers both lives and livelihoods. And our

manufacturers – those critical engines of our economy – depend on this versatile resource to run efficient combined heat and power systems and other technologies that help them manage the challenge of using energy at an industrial scale. Far from just being beneficial for cooking, gas is a key ingredient in our recipe for statewide success.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline's completion and operation is of the utmost importance to our state and our nation. The project team designed the MVP to minimize its environmental impacts by routing the project through a corridor of less than four miles within the national forest. Furthermore, extensive research and analysis has consistently concluded the project's construction can be completed without significant impacts to sensitive environmental resources. Accordingly, the NC Chamber is proud to support the project and its requested permit for construction in the Jefferson National Forest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary J. Salamido". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "G" and "S".

Gary J. Salamido
President and CEO