

PERSON COUNTY



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Person County Office Building, Room 212
304 South Morgan Street
Roxboro, North Carolina 27573-5245
(336) 597-1720
FAX (336) 599-1609

January 30, 2023

Homer Wilkes
Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Re: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for
Mountain Valley Pipeline

Dear Mr. Wilkes,

I write to express support for the U.S. Forest Service promptly authorizing the Mountain Valley Pipeline crossing the Jefferson National Forest in a manner consistent with the forest plan, by amending the plan. The approval of Mountain Valley Pipeline crossing the Jefferson National Forest is of critical importance to the future of Person County, and with appropriate conditions or stipulations, is consistent with the public interest.

Person County is home to two important electric generating plants, the Roxboro and Mayo generating stations, both owned by Duke Energy Progress, LLC. These generating plants represent significant employment and property tax revenue for Person County, the loss of which would be devastating to the County and to the Person County community. Under North Carolina legislation (House Bill 951 – 2021) and a recent decision by the North Carolina Utilities Commission, these generating plants would be planned for retirement in the next 12 years.

Person County's future prosperity is closely tied to the continued presence of Duke Energy's operations and the Mountain Valley Pipeline is critical infrastructure that will allow the siting of replacement natural gas-powered generating plants in the community. In fact, as a part of its approval of Duke Energy's Carbon Plan, the North Carolina Utilities Commission cited the availability of natural gas as a requirement for approval of the siting of future natural gas plants. Without required approvals for the construction and

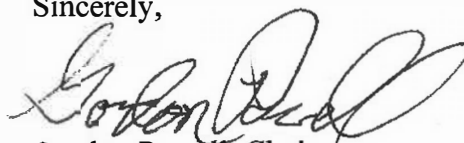
operation of Mountain Valley Pipeline, Person County is concerned that location of natural gas plants in Person County would be uncertain.

With respect to the supplemental analysis and new decision before you, resulting from the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals decision to vacate the previous Records of Decision, I respectfully request your consideration of these comments and the following specific issues. First, the economic benefit from the construction and operation of the Mountain Valley Pipeline far outweighs the potential for adverse sedimentation and erosion impacts. Second, existing regulation of sedimentation and erosion provides robust protection of the land and water within the Jefferson National Forest. Thus, it would be appropriate to require compliance with these regulations as a condition or stipulation for the amendment to the Jefferson National Forest Land Management Plan as needed to allow construction of the pipeline across 3.5 miles of the Jefferson National Forest. Third, while it is appropriate for the Forest Service to update its analysis to consider relevant new information and changed environmental conditions beyond those disclosed in the 2017 FERC FEIS and the 2020 FSEIS in response to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals decision, Person County does not expect new information or changed environmental conditions to justify denial of the necessary amendment to the Jefferson National Forest Land Management Plan. The reality is that all infrastructure projects that cross national forests have some impact to the land and waters, but it is equally true that infrastructure projects like the Mountain Valley Pipeline also bring a rising quality of life and prosperity to local communities.

In Person County's situation, the construction and operation of the Mountain Valley Pipeline is critical to preserving the role that the Person County community has had for 60 years in producing electricity to power the livelihood of our community and a large part of our state. Without the availability of natural gas that MVP would facilitate, it would become much more difficult for Duke Energy to justify locating new gas plants in Person County. In addition to the desire for new gas-powered electric generation plants to be located in Person County, the County is pursuing other economic development projects that depend upon the availability of natural gas. I respectfully request that the Forest Service give careful consideration to the reality that Person County's future is heavily dependent upon the approval of MVP and the economic benefits that MVP would unleash.

Based upon your careful consideration of these issues, I further request that the Forest Service grant the proposed amendment to the Land Management Plan for Jefferson National Forest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Powell", written in a cursive style.

Gordon Powell, Chairman
Person County Board of Commissioners