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Organization:

Title:

Comments: February 6, 2023

Dr. Homer Wilkes

Under Secretary

U.S. Department of Agriculture

c/o Jefferson Nation Forest

MVP Project

5162 Valleypointe Parkway

Roanoke, VA 24019

Re: Support for Mountain Valley Pipeline and Equitrans Expansion Project Supplemental EIS #50036

Dear Under Secretary Wilkes:

I have lived in the New River Valley for over 50 years and dedicated my professional career to helping the Roanoke and Blacksburg regions raise the standard of living through economic development, education and advancements in healthcare.

The southwest Virginia region has not had a new natural gas interstate transmission pipeline that brings additional supply of natural gas since the mid-1960s. There has been substantial growth in the New River and Roanoke Valleys, driven in large part by education and health care. Mountain Valley Pipeline (Mountain Valley) and the low cost, abundant energy that it could deliver, presents a unique opportunity to positively influence the greater southwest Virginia region for decades to come, spurring economic development and continuing to raise the standard of living. However, Mountain Valley, in its current uncompleted state, is an unfortunate eyesore and unfilled opportunity for our region. This can - and should - be rectified through the prompt completion of remaining work, the full restoration of the project right-of-way, and the transmission of economical and safe natural gas.

Having followed the Mountain Valley project closely since its inception, it is proven that the Mountain Valley Pipeline can be constructed safely, responsibly and in a manner that protects our great natural resources. I am also aware that the U.S. Forest Service has been thorough and diligent in its many reviews and analyses of the Mountain Valley's construction impact on the Jefferson National Forest.

I respectfully request that the U.S. Forest Service complete its detailed review and issue the necessary authorization to enable Mountain Valley to complete construction of this critical transmission line in the latter half of this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond D. Smoot, Ph.D.