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Comments: Dr. Wilkes,

As a resident of Virginia, I ask you to deny the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP)'s request to cross the Jefferson National Forest. The MVP has already harmed sensitive ecosystems, Indigenous sites and negatively impacted rural communities and their livelihoods. The Southgate extension would create further disruption to these vulnerable communities.

I urge the United States Forest Service (USFS) to select Alternative 1 - No Action, because the Mountain Valley Pipeline is inconsistent with the Forest Plan and would require 11 amendments and exceptions to be made for MVP.

The USFS should not amend the Jefferson National Forest Plan. The claim that waters won't be harmed by this crossing does not match real world experience. Virginia and West Virginia state inspectors have documented many problems during the construction of MVP. Both water and soil health will be harmed by the pipeline crossing. Riparian zones should be protected because of their unique ability to buffer waterways from sediment and nutrient runoff, stabilize banks, shade and regulate stream temperatures, and provide much of the food sources for river ecosystems. Research shows that damage from the construction of pipelines can cause permanent impacts on streams when they are crossed multiple times. The Jefferson National Forest was established to restore and protect water quality and water resources. Allowing the pipeline to cross through the Jefferson National Forest is contrary to that purpose.

It is incumbent on the USFS to consider the climate change impacts of the MVP and the climate disruption it would cause to the Jefferson National Forest. We are up against a critical deadline to reverse climate change. Given that the MVP would lead to nearly 90 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually, this project would doom the planet to decades of unnecessary GHG emissions and lower our chances of avoiding climate catastrophe.

USFS should be prioritizing the welfare of people, wildlife, and the environment. Climate change continues to be an existential threat to the wellbeing and health of aquarian ecosystems and those who rely on it. Deny the MVP's request to cross the Jefferson National Forest.

Thank you.