

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/3/2023 5:00:00 AM

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Title: Senior Vice President, Govt and Regulatory Affairs

Comments: Re Need for Authorization for Completion of Mountains Valley Pipeline Dear Dr. Wilkes: On behalf of the Nation's \$1.6 billion clay brick industry, I wanted to express strong support for the Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management authorizing completion of construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline MVP project. By way of background, the Brick Industry Association (BIA) represents the manufacturers and distributors of quality clay brick. The industry employs approximately 85,000 workers. Brick stands as the outstanding wall cladding. Brick - which is recyclable - is resilient, as exhibited by the fact that it has earned a one hour-long fire rating from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Similarly, brick can withstand the impact of wind-blown debris, as exhibited by tests conducted at Texas Tech. Additionally, brick's thermal qualities allow a wall composed of brick to achieve savings of up to 50 percent more energy than for walls made of competitive materials. Modern manufacturing relies on energy policies that ensure affordable, reliable, and resilient supply. Although the basic principles of brick manufacture are fairly uniform, individual plants tailor production to their particular raw materials and operation. Essentially, bricks are produced by mixing ground clay with water, forming the desired shape, and drying and firing. This requires access to affordable supplies of such energy as natural gas, along with transportation fuels to deliver bricks to the end-user. In the past two years, crude oil prices surged to as much as a 14-year high while natural gas prices rose to their highest level since 2007. These price shocks have been acutely felt by manufacturers of all sizes, as energy costs remain one of the primary drivers of the record high inflation to which our business and consumers have been subjected in recent months. BIA focuses on promoting policies and conditions promoting environmentally responsible manufacturing of clay products across the United States. Clean, reliable, and affordable access to natural gas is a key component in that effort. This is the primary reason why BIA strongly supports the completion of the Mountain Valley Pipeline project. Re-opening this program will increase the supply of affordable, reliable U.S. energy resources and send impactful signals to global markets. In turn, this will help ease the inflationary burden caused by higher energy costs manufacturers are continuing to bear. MVP has made substantial progress constructing the pipeline. With the project about 95 percent complete, MVP is poised to complete work in the second half of 2023. It is strikingly unfortunate that opponents have repeatedly filed litigation to challenge previously-approved permits, delaying its original completion date of December 2018. The Forest Service has thoroughly reviewed information related to the Projects potential sedimentation impacts, and has confirmed that, as previously predicted, the project can be built safely and responsibly. American consumers, and brick manufacturers depend on access to an energy source that is clean, reliable, and affordable. Adequate infrastructure and access to clean, reliable, and affordable natural gas is imperative. Accordingly, we encourage the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to take immediate steps that would allow MVP to complete this important energy infrastructure project. I appreciate consideration of these thoughts. Of course, please let me know of any questions.