



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

March 17, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Re: National Forest Roadless Areas

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of Agriculture. As you may know, the Commonwealth of Virginia has nearly 1.8 million acres of national forest land, and agriculture is our number one industry. I look forward to working with you to address the needs and policies surrounding forest and farm lands.

I write to you today to ask for your help in protecting inventoried roadless areas in Virginia and nationwide. Throughout my term, I have been a strong supporter of full protection for our national forest roadless areas consistent with the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration made several attempts to undo protection for roadless areas. Under the terms of recent federal district court decisions, the 2001 Roadless Rule is currently in effect in nine western states but not in the other 29 states containing national forest roadless areas. Consequently, the majority of the 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas, including those in Virginia, currently are not protected from logging and road building by the rule.

Therefore, I ask that you immediately suspend any plans that allow commercial road building or logging in inventoried roadless areas. I recommend that you issue a directive requiring Secretarial-level approval of any U.S. Forest Service projects that might be inconsistent with the 2001 Roadless Rule. Furthermore, I ask that you take

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whatever actions are necessary to uphold, defend, and enforce the 2001 Roadless Rule nationwide.

Thank you for your attention to this important federal public lands matter. I look forward to supporting your efforts in the coming year to uphold the 2001 Roadless Rule for the long term, thereby securing the many benefits it provides for the environment, national forest users, and taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy M. Kaine

TMK:cbd

c: The Honorable L. Preston Bryant, Jr., Secretary of Natural Resources