



PHIL BREDESEN
THE GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE

8 September 2004

The Honorable Ann Veneman
Secretary of Agriculture
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposal to replace the existing Roadless Area Conservation Rule with a state petitioning process for inventoried roadless area management.

The State of Tennessee took part in a ten year process to revise the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan that was published in January 2004, which included a review of roadless areas of the Cherokee National Forest. I feel confident that the current land management plan protects our roadless areas on the Cherokee National Forest.

However, I am concerned that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposal to replace the existing Roadless Area Conservation Rule with a state petitioning process for inventoried roadless area management might impose a vague, additional layer of bureaucracy that could affect the protections that currently exist in Tennessee. More specifically, I am concerned that the proposed rule has the potential to place an undue financial burden on our state agencies without providing some assurances of any concurrence or approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

My responsibility and personal desire are to continue to protect and conserve these roadless areas so that the citizens of Tennessee can enjoy the clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities of the Cherokee National Forest.

I am asking for more clarity around how these new proposed rules could affect Tennessee's current protection and conservation of these roadless areas, not just during my tenure as Governor, but for generations to come. Again, my utmost desire is to protect these roadless areas through the most effective, efficient, and reasonable means possible.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Bredesen".

Phil Bredesen