

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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February 9, 2015  
1828 Brandon Ave. SW  
Roanoke, VA 24015

USDA Forest Service  
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests  
ATTN: Mountain Valley Pipeline Survey Comments  
5162 Valleypointe Parkway  
Roanoke, VA 24019

**RE: Mountain Valley Pipeline Survey, USDA Forest Service file: 1950/2720**

Dear Forest Supervisor Speaks:

I am submitting comments on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL). BREDL has been interested in the management of our National Forests since the mid - 1980's. BREDL is a regional, community-based, non-profit environmental organization. Our founding principles are earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice, and community empowerment. BREDL has chapters throughout the Southeast, including several in Virginia. Our members depend on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests for providing and protecting area drinking water supplies. Our members rely on the recreational use, scientific attributes and life-sustaining benefits of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Additional comments from the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and our chapters' members will be submitted.

BREDL opposes this temporary special use permit. Although the US Forest Service avers that a complete inventory of forest flora and fauna needs to be completed for this project, we believe that nothing good can come of allowing this pipeline to cross national forest lands. Moreover, this "temporary" permit is far from temporary.

Approval of this special use permit on the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline would lead to other actions in the reasonably foreseeable future. These actions would include allowing the pipeline, increase in gas wells and fracking in the Jefferson National Forest. These actions would have a significant negative impact on the forest with no positive effect on the forest whatsoever. Furthermore, to consider the survey impacts alone, without considering the larger impacts of extraction and transport, is segmentation which is prohibited under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Approval now will only make it that much harder for the USDA Forest Service to deny the pipeline crossing the national forest after the process has moved further along. The time to say no is now, before a huge amount of money and resources have been spent.

*Esse quam videri*

It appears that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline are being evaluated simultaneously. Therefore, the cumulative impacts to the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests from these proposed pipelines would have to be considered before granting a permit to survey. For example, impacts to local drinking water, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, decrease of recreational enjoyment and forest fragmentation are some of the things to be considered.

In the USDA Forest Service scoping letter (file: 1950/2720) the forest service states that there will be “many opportunities for public comment, prior to deciding on the need for the pipeline.” We respectfully request the USDA Forest Service to use this opportunity to just say no to this intrusion on our national forest lands by denying this special use permit.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Barker  
SW Virginia Vice-President  
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League