

[DATE]

The Honorable [INSERT YOUR REP'S NAME HERE]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative [FILL IN YOUR REP'S NAME]

I am writing to urge your support for the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2007 (H.R. 2516). Please join Virginia Representatives Rick Boucher, Jim Moran, and Bob Scott in working to pass this important legislation and permanently protect these unique, special areas.

- The bill will protect the approximately 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas in all the national forests. Roughly 394,000 acres in Virginia's two national forests would be protected. Approximately 250,000 acres in the George Washington National Forest would be protected.
- Large blocks of mature, unfragmented forest are almost absent from the landscape in the eastern United States. Passage of this bill will help restore these critical ecosystems, as well as many forest interior wildlife species that are dependent upon the habitat they provide.
- Economic benefits will follow protection of roadless areas. Quality outdoor recreation opportunities will increase, including activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and more. This should provide financial benefits to local communities.
- Ecosystem services such as clean air, clean water, and carbon sequestration will be greatly enhanced.
- The bill will ease the burden of a roughly \$10 billion backlog of maintenance work needed on Forest Service roads nationally.
- The bill allows new roads to be constructed in order to fight fires and protect public health and safety.
- When the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was established in 2001, public support was overwhelming. More than 600 public meetings were held nationally (more than for any Forest Service project or action) as the rule was being considered. There was thorough scientific review of the rule.
- More comments were submitted on the proposed Roadless Area Conservation Rule than any other Forest Service project ever. Virginians submitted more than 45,000 comments, with 98.3% in favor of the rule. Of the more than 104,000 comments from six southeastern states combined, 97% were in favor of the roadless area protection. More than 4.2 million comments nationally have been received to date in support of roadless area protection.

I hope you will follow the example of Virginia Senators John Warner (as original sponsor) and Jim Webb (as cosponsor) in working to protect roadless areas. Please pass the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2007 and protect these valuable places. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[INSERT YOUR NAME]

[INSERT YOUR ADDRESS]

BE SURE TO PUT YOUR RETURN ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE OR IT WILL NOT BE DELIVERED.