



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor
Transition Office

Terence R. McAuliffe
Governor - elect

804 663-7474
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The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I understand that the Forest Service is very close to finalizing its revised management plan for the George Washington National Forest. The draft plan included a provision to prohibit horizontal drilling on future federal oil and gas leases.

I am writing to express my strong support for this sensible proposal. Because of the unique and valuable national forest resources in the George Washington National Forest, I specifically addressed this issue in my campaign platform. During the recent campaign, I made explicit in my platform :

Oppose fracking and horizontal drilling in the George Washington Forest. The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to protecting and managing the George Washington National Forest. Allowing fracking and horizontal drilling in this protected area is inconsistent with this commitment.

I agree with Senator Kaine's and Senator Warner's respectful requests that your office carefully consider Virginians' concerns about the impacts of fracking on public water supplies, as well as fish and wildlife habitat and the forest's outstanding recreation opportunities and scenery. As you know, ten local governments near the George Washington have expressed their concerns about the impacts of fracking on the forest, and more than 50,000 public comments on the draft forest plan—95% of all comments sent to the Forest Service—support the proposed ban on horizontal drilling.



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I commend the George Washington National Forest for the carefully considered proposal to limit fracking in the draft forest management plan, and I urge you to include this wise provision in the final plan.

Sincerely,



Terry McAuliffe

cc:

Denis McDonough, Chief of Staff, White House

Dan Utech, Deputy Director for Energy and Climate Change, White House Domestic Policy Council

Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA