

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2025

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Klobuchar:

We write to respectfully request the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry hold a hearing to consider S. 1680, the Virginia Wilderness Additions Act and S. 1681, the Shenandoah Mountain Act. These bills were recommended by the U.S. Forest Service in 2014 and endorsed by members of the George Washington National Forest Stakeholder Collaborative, a group of forest users that started work together over a decade ago to agree on acceptable locations in the George Washington National Forest for wilderness, timber harvest, trails, and other uses.

The Virginia Wilderness Additions Act – which has passed the Senate unanimously and was included in a previous Senate Farm Bill with bipartisan support – reflects a decade-long effort and would add 5,600 acres to the existing Rough Mountain and Rich Hole wilderness areas within the George Washington National Forest in Bath County. The wilderness area would be managed under the Wilderness Act, with allowances for certain restoration activities to improve water quality and aquatic passage. These activities may involve the temporary use of motorized equipment, provided they minimize environmental impact. The area will achieve full wilderness status either upon completion of these activities or five years after the bill's enactment, whichever comes first. This legislation aligns with recommendations from the U.S. Forest Service and has been supported by local stakeholders, including the George Washington National Forest Stakeholder Collaborative.

The Shenandoah Mountain Act would establish a 92,562-acre Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area (SMNSA) in Rockingham, Augusta, and Highland counties. National Scenic Areas protect the scenic, historic, recreational, and natural resources in specific areas and allow compatible uses such as outdoor recreation activities. The SMNSA encompasses four wilderness areas—Skidmore Fork, Little River, Ramsey's Draft, and Lynn Hollow—and establishes a wilderness area at Beech Lick Knob. It also includes headwaters for the Potomac and James Rivers and watersheds that provide municipal drinking water sources for Harrisonburg, Staunton, and other communities. The NSA designation would protect these rivers and streams from

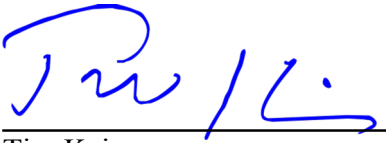
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industrial development and safeguard populations of at-risk species, such as the Cow Knob and Shenandoah Mountain Salamander.

We encourage the Committee to consider these carefully vetted and locally supported bills to balance conservation with sustainable land use in Virginia.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator