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To: <ceq_nepa@fs.fed.us>

cc:

Subject: NEPA Works

CQ209

Dear Mr. Greczmiel

I ask you to protect the integrity of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Our nation would have made little progress in slowing environmental destruction over the past quarter century had NEPA not been in place to challenge the way decisions affecting the environment are made.

Having commented on as well as prepared EISs, I know how difficult it is to dislodge the entrenched mentality that spurns environmental controls, so I can imagine what harm decisions made without this tool would cause.

We know NEPA works. It worked in Virginia when Newport News sought a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for the King William Reservoir project. Public comment brought to light the municipality's inflated estimate of future water needs, and as a result, the city cut that estimate by almost half. The environmental assessment performed by USACE also determined that the project would do significant harm to wetlands and to the economic and cultural base of the Mattaponi Indian Tribe, and that the harm could not be satisfactorily mitigated. As a result, the permit was denied.

What happened next reveals the determination of the private interests (developers in this case) to override environmental protections, because then-Governor Gilmore pushed the decision to a higher level in an attempt to overturn it.

This determination is a force that must continued to be challenged. NEPA is the tool that helps equalize the force of greed that would develop resources in the present at great expense to the future. The public has only that tool to protect future interests. Please do not endanger it by weakening the National Environmental Policy Act.

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