RESOLUTION REGARDING PROPOSED REPEAL OF THE ROADLESS RULE

At the meeting of the executive committee of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, on September 16, 2026, the following resolution was proposed and approved:

WHEREAS, the mission of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy is "We protect the lands and waters you love, forever";

WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy has worked to protect land adjoining and in the viewshed of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests since its founding in (1996 or 2003), and currently holds several conservation easements that protect and buffer these National Forests;

WHEREAS, in March of 2001, the US Forest Service implemented the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (now known as the Roadless Rule), which would prohibit development and fragmentation of roadless areas and thus protect some of the wildest, least disturbed parts of the National Forest System;

WHEREAS, Americans care about roadless areas' naturalness and wildness, their fish and wildlife habitat, the hunting and angling opportunities, and the ability to find solace in nature, because these are our lands as a birthright;

WHEREAS, these are the last, best remnants of wild America left for future generations to enjoy;

WHEREAS, polling from Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc., released in February of 2026, showed that by a strong margin of 76% to 13%, likely voters support the Roadless Rule regulation[1];

WHEREAS, in Virginia, the Roadless Rule protects 394,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, more than any other eastern state, as well as nearly 545 miles of rivers in those forests;

WHEREAS, nearly half of the Appalachian Trail runs through National Forest System lands, where roadless areas safeguard views, wildlife, and backcountry hiking;

WHEREAS, much of the Blue Ridge Parkway runs through or adjacent to National Forest lands;

[1] https://www.pew.org/-/media/assets/2026/02/national-poll-on-roadless-rule.pdf

WHEREAS, 60 million Americans rely on national forests to filter walter naturally for drinking;

WHEREAS, habitat for trout and other species depend on undammed, unlogged streams and connected landscapes;

WHEREAS, wildfires are four times more likely to start near roads and roughly 90% of wildfires start within half a mile of a road;

WHEREAS, national forests contain vast swaths of the country's remaining old-growth forest and significant carbon storage, thus helping to mitigate climate change;

WHEREAS, the existing road network already carries a more than $8.5 billion maintenance backlog, and building more roads adds to it;

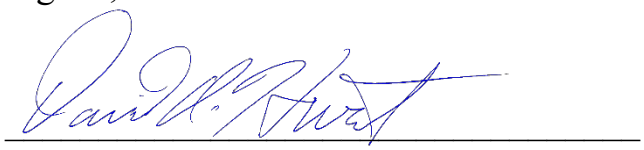
WHEREAS, existing regulations allow exceptions for hazardous fuels treatment and habitat restoration, subject to environmental review under 36 CFR part 294, subpart B;

WHEREAS, in June of 2025, the US Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced plans to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule;

WHEREAS, eliminating the Roadless Rule would open roadless areas to new road construction, commercial logging, and mining, thereby negatively impacting the conservation values of the National Forests described above, encouraging the spread of invasive species, and adding to the maintenance backlog in National Forests;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy requests that the US Forest Service not rescind or weaken the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Signed,



David A. Hurt
President of the Board