

## Senator Warner Co-Sponsors Roadless Area Conservation Act

Thank you for contacting me regarding national forest roadless areas. I appreciate the benefit of your views on this important issue.

Virginia has more roadless acreage in its national forests than any state in the East. As Governor of Virginia, I petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the 2005 State Roadless Area Policy to provide additional protection to more than 380,000 acres of roadless areas in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The petition to the USDA was approved in June 2006.

In the Senate, I have continued to work to ensure protection for the Commonwealth's roadless areas. Current legal challenges present uncertainty over the status of the inventoried roadless areas in our national forests. In March 2009, I joined several of my colleagues in urging the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, to direct the Forest Service to not propose or implement any projects that would be inconsistent with the Roadless Rule without prior approval from the Secretary's office.

In October 2009, I cosponsored the Roadless Area Conservation Act, a bill that would provide consistent, lasting national protection for inventoried roadless areas of the National Forest System. This legislation codifies into law the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. In addition, this bill allows for continued forest management that promotes forest health and enables the Forest Service to shift focus from building new roads to its backlog of maintenance needs for its existing road system.

Thank you again for contacting me. As the Senate considers and votes on legislation relating to roadless areas, I will keep your comments in mind. Please continue to be in touch with your opinions and concerns.

Sincerely,  
MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator