



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

L. Preston Bryant, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

March 4, 2008

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte
U.S. House of Representatives
2240 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4606

RE: H.R. 1576 and the Farm Bill

Dear Representative Goodlatte:

I would like to thank you for co-sponsoring H.R. 1576, which would make permanent a 2006 law that allowed landowners donating conservation easements to deduct a larger percentage of their income over a longer period of time. As you are no doubt aware, the Senate version of the Farm Bill contains an identical provision. I am writing to ask you to ensure that this provision is included in the final Farm Bill.

Virginia has an incredibly successful land conservation program, and the enhanced federal income tax deduction has been a very important contributor to that success. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation permanently protected 60,175 acres through conservation easements in 2007, which made last year its second-largest year ever. As you may know, Rockbridge County was the leader in acres recorded in 2007 with more than 5,000 acres placed in easement.

Permanently expanding the federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations would be a huge step towards continued protection of our valuable working landscapes and natural resources. Land conservation is critical to maintaining water quality, providing opportunities for recreation, and preserving wildlife habitats and historic landscapes. I commend you for taking a leadership role on this important issue.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. Please let me know if I can be helpful in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Preston Bryant, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

L. Preston Bryant, Jr.

LBPJr/cbd

c: Alfonso H. Lopez, Director, Virginia Liaison Office