



For Immediate Release
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**Wild Virginia to Senators Warner and Kaine:
Grill Ag. Secretary Nominee on Forest Service Policies**

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News outlets report that President Trump will nominate former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue to be the next Secretary of Agriculture. While most news stories focus on the Agriculture Department's responsibilities for farm policy, one of the most important duties of an Agriculture Secretary is oversight of the U.S. Forest Service. If confirmed by the Senate, Perdue would be the guardian of over 190 million acres of public land in the U.S., 1.6 million acres in Virginia.

Board of Directors: Wild Virginia insists that Mr. Perdue face hard questions about his qualifications and his intentions for the direction of the Forest Service. Issues of concern we expect Virginia's Senators to raise in the confirmation process include:

Bette Dzamba

Pipelines and Exploitation of Our Forests for Energy Company Profits

Howard Evergreen

As Virginians face dangerous natural gas pipeline proposals that would damage both the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and the interests of millions of citizens, the Secretary of Agriculture must strongly support efforts by Forest Service officials to protect these irreplaceable treasures and the public interest. Misty Boos, Wild Virginia's Director stated, "the Forest Service staff has so far insisted that sponsors of the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast Pipelines provide complete and accurate information to describe the likely impacts from their proposals. Despite failures by the energy companies to comply with those demands and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's refusal to perform adequate analyses in draft Environmental Impact Statements, the Forest Service has continued to do its job." Mr. Perdue must pledge not to buckle to pressure from energy company profiteers and rush the environmental review process. Our Senators must see to it.

Jennifer Lewis

Laurie Miller

Ernie Reed

David Sellers

Deirdre Skogen

Elizabeth Williams

Our Forests Are Not Fuel

As Governor, Sonny Perdue gave over 6 million dollars of public money to a profit-making company attempting to turn wood fibers into ethanol. If this prior record signals a devotion to using our forests to produce fuels, then we will oppose Mr. Perdue's efforts. "Extractive industries have long wanted to log and burn our forests to fuel power plants and to convert them to liquid fuel - a most inefficient use that destroys the rare values and benefits the Forests provide and accelerates climate change," according to Wild Virginia President Ernie Reed. "The Senators must probe Mr. Perdue's views on this issue and let him know that our National Forests must not be sacrificed to combustion for profits," Reed said.

Honesty and Firm Action on Climate Change

Those who deny climate change and the fact that human actions are a major cause of global warming reject science and endanger our future. The Forest Service must apply science to protect our National Forests and our climate. We can't afford to have it led by someone who refuses to face peer-reviewed analysis and scientific fact. "Will Sonny Perdue lead with the recognition that climate change is real and that our actions are largely responsible for it?" asked David Sligh, Conservation Director for Wild Virginia. "Senators Kaine and Warner have a duty to reject Mr. Perdue unless he commits to take strong action to reverse climate change."