FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Citizen groups file in federal court to stop Mountain Valley Pipeline.**

**Natural gas pipeline would destroy historic sites and pollute headwaters of Roanoke River**

BENT MOUNTAIN, VA – Today the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and its chapters Preserve Roanoke and Preserve Franklin announced they have petitioned the US Court of Appeals to halt the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

BREDL's petition requests that the court stop federal certification of the natural gas pipeline “pending the Commission’s compliance with applicable laws,” including the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

Earlier, BREDL had filed a request for rehearing of FERC's Final Order, issued on October 13, certifying approval. In response, FERC issued a “tolling order” which permits construction to begin before legal and administrative challenges are resolved. In the petition, BREDL attorney Andrea Ferster wrote, “The tolling order was not lawful.” The groups are

asking the court to vacate FERC’s decision and require the agency to consider critical information.

For over two years, Preserve Roanoke members have worked with BREDL Project Coordinator, Ann Rogers, to conduct research needed to identify rural historic districts impacted by the pipeline. Based on this work—surveys, mapping, research of historic records, and interviews with affected landowners—the Virginia Department of Historic Resources approved

the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, protecting it under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. As a result, a 2,600-acre expanse of land on the east-facing slope of Poor Mountain containing the headwaters forming the South Fork of the Roanoke River gained protection. Recently, VDHR approved a second new rural historic district, the Bent Mountain Apple Orchard Rural Historic District, encompassing 835 acres inside the Mill Creek watershed at the foot of Poor Mountain and containing historic orchard landscapes and thousands of apple trees that are remnants of the historically significant Bent Mountain apple orchard industry.

Rogers pointed out that the City of Roanoke estimates that the sedimentation caused by the MVP would deposit an additional 1,039 tons of sediment per year into the Roanoke River, costing the city $36 million annually for removal from the city's drinking water supply. Rogers said, “The MVP would be built through – not under or around – hundreds of pristine

Appalachian and Piedmont streams, springs, wetlands, and rivers.” The MVP would cross at least 120 tributaries in the headwaters of the Roanoke River. Rogers concluded, “The radical changes in hydrology brought about by the pipeline would impair drinking water not only in upstream rural areas, but also in downstream, heavily populated communities.” The groups’ Petition to Review a Final Order of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission was filed January 3rd in the US Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit in Washington, DC.

Founded in 1984, BREDL is a regional, community-based, non-profit environmental organization whose founding principles are earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice, and community empowerment. BREDL has 72 active chapters in six states in the southeastern U.S.