

**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

Hearing on H.R. 1121, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Town of Blowing Rock Land Exchange Act

April 23, 2009

10:00 AM

Statement of Congresswoman Virginia Foxx

Good Morning. I would like to thank the Committee for bringing H.R. 1121, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Town of Blowing Rock Land Exchange Act, forward for consideration. This non-controversial, bipartisan legislation is recognized by the North Carolina Delegation as essential to the Blue Ridge Parkway's vital tourism industry and the Town of Blowing Rock's access to public drinking water.

The Town of Blowing Rock, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service have agreed to this land exchange as it would mutually benefit both parties; the Town would acquire permanent ownership of its water supply reservoir to expand it by 20-acres, and the Parkway would gain a 192-acre buffer tract to ensure the integrity of its existing park holdings. My legislation simply institutionalizes this arrangement - without authorizing any funding - and in doing so ensures the Town of Blowing Rock will continue to have access to their water supply for both residents and tourists.

This land exchange will ensure an adequate public drinking water supply for the Town's citizens, guests and Parkway travelers. The Town's economy is heavily based on tourism generated primarily by the Blue Ridge Parkway. With thousands of annual visitors, the transfer will benefit the town's residents and the many North Carolinians who visit Blowing Rock each year.

A testament to its importance in the region, this legislation is cosponsored by the entire North Carolina Delegation. Here today is Scott Hildebran, Town Manager of Blowing Rock, who will also give first hand testimony to the importance of this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.