From: Carolyn Martienssen
To: baddep@ptd.net
Subject: Fw: Citizens Coal Council Action Alert
Date: Monday, January 18, 2010 5:18:12 PM

From: Citizens Coal Council
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2010 2:00 PM
To: oscette@ptd.net
Subject: Citizens Coal Council Action Alert

CITIZENS COAL COUNCIL

Working Together for Justice in the Coalfields

January 18, 2009

Re: OSM Oversight Comment Period ends tomorrow, January 19th.

Dear Friends and Allies of CCC:

Time is running out!

On November 18th, 2009 the Department of Interior (DOI) sent out a News Release stating that they are making plans to strengthen the oversight and inspections of coal mines and to promulgate Federal regulations to better protect streams affected by surface coal mining operations. The DOI is gathering public input for a new rule that will supposedly be based on sound science. The OSM is publishing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the protection of streams from the adverse impacts of surface coal mining operations. The notice requests comments on alternatives for revising the current regulations, which include the stream buffer zone rule.

OSM Notice: Making Oversight of Surface Coal Mining More Effective

Background

During the 1960s and 70s environmental groups and coalfield citizens from across the country banded together and fought hard in demanding the establishment of environmental laws and regulations that would protect citizens and communities

from the devastation caused by the mining of coal. A direct result of this effort was the passing of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) in 1977. SMCRA covers all surface coal mining operations as well as the surface effects of underground coal mining.

Shortly after the passing of SMCRA, the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) was created within the Department of Interior to administer the Act. The OSM is charged with ensuring mining operations meet minimum standards of health, safety and environmental protection. During the first two years after SMCRA's passing, the OSM accomplished quite a bit by closing over 1,000 illegal mines and beginning the reclamation process, but this was short lived.

For decades since the passing of SMCRA, the OSM has been plagued with mismanagement that has allowed for thousands of miles of streams to be dewatered, polluted or buried by valley fills, mountaintops to be blown off, prime farmland in Illinois to be rendered useless from longwall mining, inadequate reclamation efforts to repair environmental damage, and the lack of proper enforcement and oversight of state programs. The OSM failings have directly affected citizens in the coalfields, the same citizens that SMCRA was written by Congress to protect.

What We Need to Do:

CCC is urging everyone to send in your comments and be heard! We should not let this opportunity to air our concerns to the OSM pass us by. Who knows better than the coalfield residents that have to deal with the destruction of our homes, communities, water supplies and culture?

Some of the suggested issues to comment on include:

- **Mountaintop removal**
- **Longwall mining**
- **Strip Mining**
- **Blasting**
- **Lack of proper reclamation**
- **Lack of proper cumulative hydrological assessments**
- **Bonding**
- **Lack of proper state oversight and enforcement**
- **Need for increased funding for both state and federal mining programs**
- **Stream Buffer Zone**
- **Lack of clear standards on the definition of "approximate original contour"**
- **Lack of proper public participation in the permitting process**
- **Loopholes in the regulations that allow for irrepretable destruction of our environment through mining activities**
- **Science needs to dictate policy**

Please send your comments via e-mail to: oversight@osmre.gov by tomorrow, January 19, 2009. You can find a sample letter here; please feel free to add your own comments to the sample letter as you wish.

For more information please visit:

- **To Keep the Republic - Office of Surface Mining seeks comments on Oversight Policy - Our Response Should be Simple - Enforce the Law (Professor Mark Squillace)**
- **Red Lodge Clearinghouse - Guide to submitting comments**
- **Talking Points by Mark Squillace**

Thank you for your help!
Citizens Coal Council

PS: Please visit our website at: www.citizenscoalcouncil.org to learn more about coal issues.

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