

Letter to the Editor published on Tuesday, February 19, 2008.

Let the people decide

The coal industry supports mountaintop mining. *The Courier-Journal* and environmental groups oppose this type of mining. There are those who take a one-day trip to this region, become experts, and feel compelled to write about their opposition to this practice.

This debate could easily be handled if we treated mountaintop mining like liquor sales. Let the communities where the mining is performed vote up or down if they want it. *The Courier-Journal* couldn't vote, the outside environmental groups couldn't vote, the lawmakers who don't live in the region couldn't vote.

On the other side, coal company executives not living in these communities couldn't vote. Bill Caylor, with the Kentucky Coal Association, and I couldn't vote.

Those that could vote are the hard-working people in these coal communities, and those that are supported by the industry, that believe and understand the entire process, and not just the rhetoric of half truths and outright lies. I have great faith in the citizens of these communities. They are well informed, and are more than capable of making decisions that affect their communities both in the short and long term.

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