

Published March 23, 2008

REALITY CHECK ON COAL MINING

It seems that only a few people can attack coal mining and it gets very much press while the benefits of mining are largely ignored by the news media. The recent "Stream Saver Bill" would have, if passed, basically eliminated mining of all types in Kentucky, not just mountaintop removal, because even underground mines could not have been faced up where it is necessary to store the dirt and rock from the initial excavation in a hollow.

Sadly, it has come to the point where coal miners can no longer simply get out of bed, go to their jobs and put in a hard day's work to feed and clothe their families while providing domestic energy and helping this nation in its struggle against the use of overpriced foreign oil. We must now take time out of our busy schedules to make the general public aware of the truth about coal mining or we could wake up one day and not have a job to go to.

The truth is

- that most fill areas are not in streams at all but, rather, dry gullies at the head of hollows or valleys,
- that most landowners are in favor of fill areas because it improves their property and makes it more usable,
- that there is not much level land in Eastern Kentucky except what is created by surface mining,
- that there are numerous industries and health care facilities sitting on these sites providing much-needed jobs and services,
- that the coal industry pumps mega dollars back into the economy and into the tax base,
- that the coal industry provides thousands of jobs and helps reduce our dependency on foreign oil,
- that there are more than ample laws to ensure that the land is reclaimed, that today miners are good stewards of the land, and
- that the moving of dirt and rock (commonly referred to by the news media as mine waste) from a higher elevation and placing it in a lower elevation would be called development (a good thing) except where coal is being mined, and there it is called mountaintop removal (a bad thing).

I ask only that you give coal mining a fair shake and print the truth.

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