

Received
26 Sept 07

September 17, 2007

OSMRE
Administrative Record
Room 252 SIB
1951 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen of Virginia, in regards to OSM docket number 1029-AC04, concerning the proposed changes to the stream buffer zone rule. I believe this rule change would not only allow Coal Companies to continue to bury thousands of miles of streams throughout the Appalachian mountains under piles of rubble created by mountaintop removal coal mining, but would even increase the burying of vital headwater mountain streams.

As someone who lives in the coalfields of Virginia, I feel that our regulatory agencies should protect both the citizens and the local environment and hold the Coal Companies accountable for their actions and therefore not give them a "free pass" to continue their destructive practices.

According to the U.S. Office Of Surface Mining's own figures, 1,208 miles of streams in Appalachia were destroyed from 1992 to 2002, and regulators approved 1,603 more valley fills between 2001 and 2005 that will destroy 535 more miles of streams. Lapses in the current Buffer Zone Rule have allowed significantly more than the reported 1,200 miles of streams to be buried or degraded by mining waste. Repeal of the current Buffer Zone Rule would result in 1,000 miles of streams to be destroyed each decade in the future.

The burying of these streams not only kills the aquatic life in them but also endangers the local community. The filling in of these streams, and the valleys they're in, greatly increases rain runoff by as much as 40% and has resulted in increased flooding throughout the region, causing destruction of residents' property, personal injury and even death. This rule change will only increase the risk of harm to us local residents.

I am writing to ask that OSM "pull the rule" and enforce the current laws to fully protect our streams. I also think that the amount of time that OSM has granted for the comment period is unreasonable and should be extended 90-days so that people in these communities have a chance to speak. In addition, OSM should grant hearings in the regions where these laws will directly affect the people, in the coalfields of Appalachia.

Sincerely,

Kathy R. DeWage
6611 Kemper Rd.
Hise, VA 24293

OSMR

P.O. Box 453

Appalachia, VA 24216

FIRST CLASS

OSMR, Adm. Record

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