

Oak Ridge, Tennessee
November 19, 2007

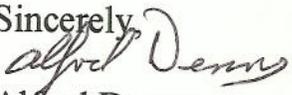
Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation
Administrative Record
Room 252 SIB
1951 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20240

**Re: Rulemaking, Coal Mine Waste and Buffers for Waters of the US
Docket Number RIN 1029-AC04**

Dear Sir:

It is important that stream buffers be maintained or strengthened to protect our waters. In contrast to much-needed restrictions on mountain-mining activities that affect watersheds in Tennessee, the recently announced rule-change proposal would make the protective stream buffer a matter of discretion or practicality. It fails to require, as under current law, assertive proof of no harm to water bodies in the provision of mining permits. The exemptions to stream buffer adherence it allows--such as positioning coal sludge ponds within waters or burying headwaters under mine waste--would lead to destruction of many more streams, at a time when demands on clean water are on the rise.

Clean water is our most important natural resource. It is a fundamental necessity that is at risk of becoming scarce in many regions of the country, its future amplitude and continued purity threatened by many forces. I am writing to strongly oppose the rule-change, as it would weaken a critical safeguard for maintaining healthy watersheds.

Sincerely,


Alfred Denny
109 Iris Circle
Oak Ridge, TN 37830-5054