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mining industry.

MR. SASLOW:
Ten seconds.

MR. SHEPPARD:
Particularly in light of the fact that their attacks are centered upon permits that are already improved now.

MR. SASLOW:
Thank you, sir.

MR. SHEPPARD:
The EPA revokes its permit, it will forever cast a doubt.

MR. SASLOW:
Thank you. Next, 555, Marilyn Mullens.

MS. MULLENS:
Good evening, everyone. My name is Marilyn Mullens. I am a West Virginian. Spent most of my life here except for the time when I served my country. Yes, I'm a taxpayer. I'm a mother. I'm a soldier for 21 years.

And I'm here to oppose. I've heard a lot tonight about jobs and money, and I understand that. But when does money and jobs come before life? What is the first thing we do when we hurt? A family member, a coworker, anybody we care about has a house
fire, but they survive. They got out. We're glad.
Those things can be replaced. Those are just things.
Those are not life. Life can't be replaced.

What are we going to do when the earth
becomes so polluted there's no going back? We are not
the only species that depend on clean water to
survive. There has to be clean water for every living
thing, including us.

I heard a man speak about palpable water,
and that's wonderful. I want everyone to have clean
water. But we need animals. We need plants, they
have to have clean water. I have a folder full of
studies that shows a direct link, the causes that
mountaintop removal mining is polluting our water.
The mission statement of the EPA is to put human
health as a safeguard to natural environment, air,
water, land, the life of the kids. That's all. I'm
for the EPA to veto this permit. Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:
Number 556, Emmett Pepper. Mr. Pepper?
557, Paula Swearengin.

MS. SWEARENGIN:
Thank you. My name is Paula Swearengin.
And I'd like to begin by saying I'm a coal miner's
daughter. I'm a coal miner's granddaughter, and I am
a West Virginia citizen.

People seem to be worried about jobs in the coal industry. That is my concern as well. But if you look at what the census tells us, we have 744,000 civilian workers in West Virginia. Only 30,000 of those jobs are directly related to the coal industry. 5,200 to 6,000 of those jobs are mountaintop removal. There are more unemployed in this state than there are coal workers. Talk about smoke and mirrors.

In the '70s we had 120,000 mine workers. Again, now that is not the case. Mountaintop removal takes fewer underground workers than it does our men because it's man versus machine. Machines are doing the jobs of our workers in this state.

On a corporate level the coal industry will get their piece of the pie. But it doesn't make it right for companies to bury our rivers and streams, poisoning our children, and destroying communities. There's no concern for safety. There's no concern for the environment.

Clean water should not be an option in America. It's a right. Responsibility should not be questioned. Responsibility should have been in place already. I am a West Virginian. My children are
entitled to drink clean water. And a miner should not have to choose between poisoning their child and his job. Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:

Number 558, Lisa Bragg, Mrs. Bragg.

We're going to continue on. Number 559, Bill Raney of the West Virginia Coal Association.

MR. RANEY:

Yes, sir. Thank you all. Thank you all for being here. I'm Bill Raney. I'm proud to represent the West Virginia Coal Association and Friends of Coal across West Virginia. We do appreciate you all being here and welcome you to Charleston. However, you dig deep into a common working man's definition of environmental justice you'll find that the threat, this threat by EPA very offensive.

To revoke this permit without any reason would be wrong. Revoking this permit that was lawfully issued almost three years ago with your agency's blessing after more than ten years, the most comprehensive environmental review again by your agency, is as troublesome, unnecessary, and arrogant as anything we've ever seen in West Virginia. Taking these jobs which are real tangible and a source value....
for the people of West Virginia and Appalachia without any suggestion the performance had not been in complete compliance is an injustice.

The action seems to be based on supposition and not on studies that are designed to support the personal opinions and objections of people in Washington and Philadelphia. There is no evident concern of the real impact of taking real jobs from men and women who get up every morning and pursue in West Virginia so you all in D.C. and Pennsylvania can have electric lights. Jobs that are paying for their homes, their children's education, and healthcare for their aging parents. One is going to absolutely disrupt the real lives of the best coal miners in the world.

It will paralyze investments with uncertainty. That is real. And taken to the next level no business is safe from the bullying hand of your agency. So yes, we're concerned, and you'll hear that tonight. And we'll go home and hope that we have a job in the morning as you go back to Philadelphia. This is not environmental justice. It is injustice. And it is simply not right. We ask you to put our people first, put our state first, and let the jobs at Spruce go forward. Thank you.
MR. SASLOW:  
560, Mr. Johnson, a private citizen. 

MR. JOHNSON:  
Good evening. My name's Nick Johnson.  
I'm proud to work with Arch Coal. We're an industry 
leader in mine safety and environmental compliance. 
Arch is a company that takes its obligations to 
workplace safety and environmental stewardship very 
seriously. We care deeply about the wellbeing of our 
employees and are relentless in the pursuit of safety, 
minimizing our environmental impact. 

Arch Coal is an industry leading safety 
performance and environmental responsibility as 
evident year after year and speaks volumes about the 
character and integrity of this company and its 
employees. You cannot find a better company to 
responsibly manage a surface operation like Spruce. 
They are passionate about safety and committed to 
operating within appropriate environmental guidelines. 
No one cares more about the environment of lives of 
West Virginia than the men and women who live and work 
here. 

Myself like many of our miners are avid 
outdoorsmen with hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, and 
other activities that depend on sound environmental
controls. The recent actions to restrict or revoke the Spruce permit are unprecedented and reek of politics. They are threatening the livelihood of various individuals who live and work in these communities while markedly increasing the risks of companies that are trying to bring jobs to this region.

The validity of the permit that you revoke every mining operation is at risk. I believe the nature of your arguments and actions will restrict surface mining in central Appalachia are based on politics and the unrealistic views of environmentalists, many of whom have never seen surface mining or have any understanding of the mine process and the great lengths that this company goes through in order to protect the environment and minimize our impact.

In conclusion, I have asked that Arch Coal and Mingo Logan Coal Company to proceed with the Spruce permit.

MR. SASLOW:
Number 561, Thornton Newlon, the Virginia Coal Association.

MR. NEWLON:
I am Thornton Newlon. I’m here tonight
to represent the Virginia Coal Association. Virginia Coal Association is a state paid association whose members include coal mines in Virginia, various mining equipment and suppliers and consulting firms to the coal industry. It might be fairly asked why would anyone from Virginia be concerned of a mining permit in West Virginia? The answer is the action proposed with respect to the Spruce mine will have serious consequences for Virginia coal industry and the people in Virginia in general.

For over 125 years coal mined by thousands of miners in Virginia and West Virginia have been hauled over railroads founded in Virginia for power plants and steel mills for many states, and the many roads in Virginia where it is loaded on ships and exported all over the world.

What the EPA is proposing to do is veto. It is a revocation of a valid existing right. It has stopped the project through its 13 years of work and millions of dollars have been permitted. From a Virginia perspective, this action by EPA has created an uncertainty in the marketplace that discourages investment in Virginia coal mines and sales for Virginia coal. It threatens the jobs of thousands of Virginians.
If industry cannot allow an issuance of a permit, we will all pay. Or even worse, more of what we need will be produced in other countries. The reliability of permits must not depend on what happens in an election. Our government must continue to be one of laws and not of men. Otherwise no one's job or property will be safe from the power of the government.

MR. SASLOW:

Number 562, Mr. Mark Rowe of Eagle Creek Mining, Inc.

MR. ROWE:

My name's Mark Rowe. I'm vice president of Eagle Creek mine and Hawkeye Contracting. This company is a mining reclamation operation in southern West Virginia and Kentucky. We've been working on the Spruce permit area since before the Clean Water Act was issued. In fact, we're constructing and draining control systems on the permit. Currently we have 69 employees working on this and other problems on this property. Additionally our operation employs 30 contract employees on the property. In addition to those employees there are 31 employees that are in the administrative offices at our off-site repair and maintenance shop.
Along with these 130 employees there are an additional 260 family members that depend on support by these jobs. Our employees receive good pay, healthcare benefits, a retirement plan, life insurance, and paid vacations.

On the projects we are working on many leading edge technicians monitor the performance of these systems on a day-in/day-out basis. Mingo Logan expects our operation can comply with the requirements of various permits and to exceed those standards.

With the support of the company our employees are encouraged to participate in local and community efforts. Additionally, Mingo Logan has provided funding projects to make improvements such as stream channel enhancements.

Our company is a performed award winning recognition in the region. In 2009, Little Creek Mine received awards such as safety award. Eagle Creek Mine participates, volunteers and we contribute to a foster care program in the needy area. Our company identifies and contributes to local charities each and every year. I've been on many properties in West Virginia --

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you, sir.
MR. ROWE:

--- Spruce area. I would encourage EPA not to --- decision which was reached 13 years in the process.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you very much. Number 563, Nick Carter. Apparently he's not here. 564, Amy Keim, I apologize if I didn’t pronounce that right. 565, Steve Roberts from the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

MR. ROBERTS:

Thank you very much for coming to West Virginia and thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly on behalf of West Virginia miners, energy exploration, our nation's energy needs, West Virginia's economy, and the importance of balance and reason when the needs of workers, consumers, and citizens, and regulators. I'm Steve Roberts, a proud West Virginian. I'm the president of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce. The West Virginia Chamber is a large business and economic development advocates through organizations. Chamber members are proudly located in every role of our state's counties and together we employ over half of West Virginia's workers.
First, let me say that our nation's miners are heroes. God bless the people who work hard every day to provide the coal that powers our plants, lights our homes, heats our schools and hospitals, and makes the steel that's made our nation the greatest country on the planet in the whole course of human history.

Energy exploration and production support our economy and way of life. The fantastic march forward in medicines, research, computers, education, lifestyle, and longevity would not have been possible without energy that is abundant, reliable, and affordable. And that means coal. Our nation can and will continue to progress and energy production is crucial to this progress.

Here in West Virginia our own economy relies heavily on natural resource production of all kinds. Coal is responsible for at least 75,000 of our best paying jobs, and that's 98 percent of our homes and provides revenue taxes.

With no explanation U.S. EPA for the first time in history indicated it will rescind a mining permit. This questionable action creates environmental issues for all projects that are not assured. I urge the EPA to turn around and change
course and not accept the incorrect notion that you
can only save the environment by killing jobs. Thank
you very much.

MR. SASLOW:
Number 566, Mr. Chad Story, House of
Delegates, the 19th District.

MR. STORY:
Thank you. My name is Chad Story. I'm a
candidate for West Virginia House of Delegates, 19th
District, and a proud citizen of Logan County. I
stand before you today to urge you to allow the
employees of Spruce Number One mine to continue by
stopping the veto process.

First of all, I want to comment on a few
things said earlier. The most anti-coal president in
history. And secondly, for the lady with the folder
full of science, well, you may have a folder full of
science, but we have many mines that's full of coal.
We have a lot of children. We have a lot of others to
take care of. This is the income basis of West
Virginia, and we need to mine coal.

I'm ashamed that the EPA has no regard
for the economical consequences of their actions nor
the input of the other state and federal agencies
involved. When this permit was issued by the EPA, and
it's been in production for two years. If this permit is revoked it will affect approximately 250 direct mining jobs and 300 indirect jobs. That's 550 families. That's children, babies, elderly, public education and health care for hard-working people and puts West Virginia at risk. If this permit is revoked, what's to stop the EPA from targeting more? This is nothing more than a political agenda from the radical environmental extremists and the current administration that wants nothing more than to see West Virginia coal go from the value of the most inexpensive energy possible. This isn't only aimed at Logan County. It's all of West Virginia. And not only is it the world's greatest resource, it's West Virginia. Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:

David Wilder from Teco Energy.

MR. WILDER:

My name's David Wilder. I'm a 31-year-old surface coal miner. The coal company I work for has been waiting six years on one permit. The Spruce mine waited ten years. After you give it to them they got to work three of them and then you took it away. I'm here for the workmen. These permits affect 80,000 direct coal jobs in Appalachia as well as supply
affordable electricity to 80 million homes and over 95 percent of the manufacturers.

EPA didn't even follow their own criteria. These are offered by any activity including highway construction, shopping malls. The EPA represents absolutely no influence. The only thing I can't understand is direct pressure on the Appalachian people. This law became effective April 1st, 2010, only to affect the Appalachian states.

Can somebody please explain that to me?

I thought the states made state laws and the federal government made federal laws. I'm a coal miner, and we're coal miners. This is our livelihood and our way of life. This is all we know.

MR. SASLOW:
Number 568, Robin Blakeman.

MS. BLAKEMAN:
Thank you. My name is Robin Blakeman, and I represent the private citizens. I should also say I’m a Presbyterian minister. I work with the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. I’m a mother, a taxpayer, and a West Virginia resident most of my life, and eighth generation West Virginia resident. And that's why I registered as a private citizen. I want to speak from the perspective of my eighth
generation of heritage in this state, heritage that
goes back before the state was a state. My ancestors
came in here to Boone County as some of the first
Caucasian settlers. They were granted land because of
their service in the Revolutionary War. It is from
that heritage that I speak.

It is my opinion that this permit and all
other mountaintop removal and radical surface mining
permits must be eliminated. The water that runs
through our hills and our people are the best and most
important natural resources in this state and this
region. A visit to my ancestral land have formed my
opinion of why these water quality standards need to
be upheld and enforced.

My family property is in a place called
Little White Oak Hollow. There's a creek that runs
through that hollow. When I was little, I started
once to throw a gum wrapper in that creek. And my
grandfather, who was a coal miner, said to me don’t do
that. That creek runs down through the Coal River,
runs down to the Kanawha River, runs to the Ohio River
which runs to the Mississippi. These waters are
precious and we must protect them. Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you. Just a quick second. I'd
MR. BOSTIC:

Good evening. And thank you for letting me come out here and speak tonight and for EPA's continued attention throughout the evening. In the context of this hearing and this proposed veto action, I think we have to ask what has changed in the three years since the Spruce permit was issued. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Corps responded in detail to EPA's allegations. And even evidence the Corps did not agree with EPA's supposed evidence that revocation of this permit was warranted. Further, because many of EPA's allegations related to the state's water quality standards, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection responded as well. West Virginia DEP found no reason to believe that the issuance of the Spruce permit or its operation warranted this. Moreover the West Virginia legislature which reviewed and adopted water quality standards for their state has formally concluded that our state water quality standards were correctly
implemented with respect to the Spruce permit.

I will submit to everyone in here tonight, especially the officials from EPA that nothing has changed except for the attitude from the administration of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. That suddenly a federal agency knows better how to read water quality standards, better than the Corps of Engineers, better than the state agency directly responsible for implementing them, better than the elected legislatures that actually passed the standards the EPA now seeks to interpret.

And finally, this new EPA somehow knows better than the EPA of three years ago that actually approved the Spruce mining permit. This exercises their regulatory dysfunction if it were not so deathly serious. It's a serious situation as you've heard from other speakers. Hundreds of jobs are at stake, millions of dollars of investments, millions of dollars in tax revenues, and perhaps more importantly the faith of this Spruce mine. I urge you to rescind this action, rethink this, respect the boundaries of the authority of the programs on which we all rely.

Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you, sir. Number 570, Monty Boyd,
from Walker Machinery.

**MR. BOYD:**

Good evening. My name is Monty Boyd and I’m the owner of Walker Machinery and Whayne Supply Company. Walker is the Caterpillar dealer in West Virginia and southeastern Ohio, and Whayne is the Caterpillar dealer in Kentucky and southern Indiana. I've been in this industry for 30 years. Our geographic area includes the Appalachian coal fields and the Illinois basin coal fields. We have 46 locations and employ nearly 2,000 people, most of whom serve this industry with mining equipment, replacement parts, and rebuilding and repairing services. Between the two companies, nearly 70 percent of our business is from the mining industry. So the central Appalachian mining industry is vital to our future and the 2,000 families of our employees which live in communities from Summersville, West Virginia, to Paducah, Kentucky.

I'm not here just to speak for our employees but for all of the employees of suppliers to this mining industry which is vital to our nation's security, economy, and energy needs. Tonight there's been many points addressed and I'd like to address many of them. But I only have time to address one
primary point. The decision being addressed through this evening is not just impacting Arch Coal and its local mining communities. It involves all coal mining companies and the suppliers to this industry.

MR. SASLOW:
Ten seconds.

MR. BOYD:
Skipping to my end, I ask that you consider the entire economic, business, and the impact of this decision and approve the permit which has met all legal requirements and allow the tens of thousands of the hardest working Americans, families, and companies to continue to work and live in this land that we love.

MR. SASLOW:
Thank you, sir. Number 571, Donald Gibson, private citizen.

MR. GIBSON:
I'm Donald Gibson. I'm here tonight representing the Coal Mining of Our Future, 7,500 members. I'm here representing International Coal Group, over 1,000 employees. I didn't come here tonight with a profound statement, but I came here because I appreciate my job, and I came here to support my brothers and sisters in this industry.
To the young lady that stood here before me and said she had served her country 22 years, 21 years, I appreciate your service. If you were only on the panel, I would challenge you to turn to your right and notice this flat. This is still the United States of America. I intend to submit written comments. I understand I've got until June the 1st to do that. Those comments should be familiar to you. However, due to the actions of the EPA, I doubt that you've ever read them. They're called the Constitution of the United States.

Again, I stand here to support the Spruce permit, and I ask that you end this process to veto. Thank you.

MR. SASLOW:
Thank you. Chris Hamilton, the West Virginia Coal Association.

MR. HAMILTON:
Good evening. I'm Chris Hamilton. I'm a friend of coal. Welcome to West Virginia and welcome to Charleston, the state's center of economy. It's also the nation's industrialized heartland and potential energy center where manufacturing steel and coal production coexist, the nation’s thriving recreation tours of this industry. And if you stay
longer, you can see in these hearings and witness firsthand how these major industries not only exist but truly complement one another due to the remarkable level of state planning, the administration of state regulatory programs, and the supreme stewardship of our precious natural resources.

West Virginia is a prime example of how you can have it all. We are one of the nation's leading energy states presently accounting for over 40 percent of the energy needs that powers the entire east coast from Massachusetts down to Jacksonville which includes Philadelphia. We're comprised of thousands of men and women who are devoted. We're providing the state, the region, the world, with low-cost reliable household and industrial power. It's what we do. It's what we have done for centuries. It's our way of life, our heritage, our culture. Front line of the blue collar and middle class of the country.

We also have one of the nation's most surviving tourism industries where people come from all over the country to partake in our rafting, hiking, trail riding, and some other outdoor recreational activity within the same geography of energy production. Let's just say it doesn't just
happen. It's all planned here within one of the toughest regulatory frame works found anywhere in the world. It's a great environmental achieving. I submit to you that no other state, no other country has the regulatory controls and oversight that we have here. And a body of law governing mining, the mine permitting processes that you'll not even find under federal law. Thank you so much. We urge you to reconsider your action and allow this mine ---.

MR. SASLOW:
Kate Lambdim, private citizen. We are going to pass on to Honorable Ron Stollings.

SENATOR STOLLINGS:
Good evening. I’m Senator Ron Stollings, your senator from the Seventh District. We are the largest coal producing district in West Virginia. One of three jobs in our district is directly or indirectly related to coal. I live in Madison, more specifically Haddock along the Spruce River. I drink the water. I float in Spruce River. I hike the hills and enjoy a wonderful quality of life. Third, I’m a medical doctor to many patients who also enjoy growing old in southern West Virginia. If I was aware that the mining of the Spruce River permit was negatively impacting our health, I would be fighting against it.
But that is not the case.

I stand here tonight to strongly support the mining of this coal and provide jobs directly and indirectly, provide energy to America, and provide an outstanding tax base.

The regulation to the extent of the Environmental Protection, economic development and energy supply has not happened with the current EPA leadership. With regard to surface mining in general, we in southern West Virginia have a very limited supply relatively trying developing the land. We however do have Corridor G and we do have some pending permits along the Corridor G that give us some much needed land to help diversify our regional economy and keep West Virginia and the United States strong. We can't find a place to build a school or to build hospitals.

My colleague Senator Oliverio mentioned earlier that we passed since the current resolution number 61. What he didn’t tell you was that it passed 34 to nothing in the State Senate and 100 to nothing in the House of Delegates. So that's what the elective leaders in West Virginia have to say, and I urge you to please let them mine this coal on Spruce River. Thank you.
MR. SASLOW:

Number 575, Bill Bledsoe of the Virginia Mining Association, Inc. Let's move to number 576, Erkan Esmer Ph.D., P.E.

DR. ESMER:

Hello. I'm Erkan Esmer of Esmer and Associates, Inc. Consulting Engineers. I've been listening to the U.S. EPA since 1970. EPA was established in 1970 and got into the coal business in about '72. And in that time we had to fill out the show-form cease. It was just two or three lines. So we had to comply. And now I wonder what in the heck did they fill out on this paper? I think they were gathering paper.

The next thing was the Civil War era, the operation of coal mining. And we switched to coal. But somehow the EPA gave promise to the states, and things went pretty good. And the roofs, Sierra Club, all started coming here from all over the country, mostly out of California, and they're telling us what the hell to do. Then they blow up this global warming. Now, then when they called it they wanted some change. Okay. I got to say one more word?

MR. SASLOW:

One more.
MR. ESMER:

Okay. The two things that the ice age and the heat pocket were ice. Ice cap melts by natural reasons, not by hocus pocus science.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you. 577, Maria Gunnoe, Boone County Citizen. No? 578, Stephen Keen, Bright Enterprises

MR. KEEN:

Thank you. I'm Steve Keen from Bright Enterprises. I'm an engineer and I've had experience related to the mining industry on both sides. I'm forced to bundle the laws in two states in my career. I've worked in the mining industry as an engineer. I continue to be involved indirectly now through businesses I work for now.

I have heard a lot of sincerity tonight from those here opposing the Spruce Mine permit. I have to say in response, you can be sincere. You can even be hysterically sincere and you can still be wrong. As I tried to think about what to say about the EPA's actions, finally one word came to mind and it just kept sticking with me. That's the word I'm going to use. That word is abuse. The proposal to veto the permit that has already been issued to two to
three years earlier based on something that can't be called science. That is in a board in action. It's something they should not be doing. It's an abuse. It's an abuse of discretion at the federal level. It's an abuse of the federal/state relationship. It's an abuse of the privacy program and the state agencies to be the primary enforcers. It's an abuse of the mineral and landowners whose coal you're trying to place off limits. It's an abuse to the systems whose livelihoods depend on mining this coal.

I want to talk about the unrelated consequence of the federal/state regulatory actions. In this state the consequences are severe. The approach you're taking to veto this permit has consequences far beyond mountaintop mining. I think we know that, those here know that. What I worry is that they stop and that those consequences will be to eliminate coal mining. This is wrong.

MR. SASLOW:

MR. SHEPHERD:
Thank you. My name's Chris Shepherd, and I was born here in Charleston and raised on a farm 20 miles from here. I love my state. I thank God for
being born here and I want a life here for my children
and grandchildren. Thank God for being born and
raised here as well.

However, today I'm the only one of my
siblings and my family who grew up here who still live
in our home state. Every one of them have left our
home because of a lack of opportunity for a good life
here. I too find it difficult to stay in my home
state due to the crime and poor economic conditions
here. Clearly something has gone wrong here in West
Virginia. We are the most beautiful state in America,
but one of the poorest states. We are one of the
proudest states in America, but we are one of the
least educated states. We are the most unhealthy
state and we are even the state with the least teeth
per capita in America. Why is this? What happened to
us? Why is the state that’s so great, such great
beauty, and such a wealth of natural resources and
human resources and culture, how did we become so
destitute?

It is the same reasons that the counties
most rich in coal are also the poorest counties in
West Virginia. The answer goes back to the founding
of our great state and the condition continues today,
and that condition is simple. New York City and
Philadelphia snapped up our mineral rights, out-of-state corporations think it’s a public state, a resource colony which serves only to make a few corporations wealthy. All West Virginians are exploited by this process. We must halt this downward cycle.

And quite simply, the argument that our economy is held by mountaintop removal mining brings all of us to take a look at the economical realities here in West Virginia, especially economic reality in coal-producing counties. Therefore the EPA can help our state on holding by halting the deliberation of our state for cash. Therefore I urge you to veto the permit.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you, sir. Now for the next speaker, before the next speaker we are going to call the next batch of speakers to the gold curtain in a couple moments. If you are sitting and you decide that you do want to speak, the same things apply. You do need to go out and get one of the wrist bands and add your name to the list. So think about it. Make your way to the registration table if you change your mind and decide that you want to speak. Let's go to number 581, Vivian Stockman, of the Ohio Valley
Environmental Coalition.

MS. STOCKMAN:

Hi, I'm Vivian Stockman of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition which is based in Huntington, West Virginia. Lesson number one is a permit for mountaintop removal with such intense scrutiny. That's because community members stood up and spoke out, are standing up and are speaking out even in the face of intimidation. It's obvious the EPA is under intense political pressure to abandon science, but I urge the EPA to stand strong in upholding the law and proceed with the veto of this permit. I'm glad they're moving to consider the environmental justice aspect of mountaintop removal.

Mountaintop removal drives communities' extinction and destroys the ecosystem services essential for long-term sustainable economical health. Clean water is the basis of human health, and essential to sustainable economic development. I urge the EPA to undertake a study of the value of ecosystem services we have in the southern mountain communities. Couple that with the study of all the externalized cost of mountaintop removal. The results will shine a light on and the cause that mountaintop removal inflicts upon us.
I urge the EPA to overcome the political pressure of an industry so long accustomed to doing whatever it wants with our land, our water, and our people, an industry that has held the mule more valuable than the man and that there are problems such as black lung leave us high and dry until the last piece of coal is blown out of the last coal-bearing mountain. Please veto the permit.

MR. SASLOW:
Number 597 right now, Christopher Trent, private citizen.

MR. TRENT:
Good evening. My name is Chris Trent. I’m from Logan County. It's great to be here in West Virginia. My grandfather and father are coal miners, and I'm very proud of my heritage. We understand EPA has a job to do, but we wish you would understand something. So do we.

Coal mining is a hard, honest living providing cheap energy, keeping America secure and energy independent. Someone spoke earlier and mentioned that a stream would not come back after mountaintop removal. Well, let me tell you something else that won't come back if you veto this permit. Our jobs. And my comments are brief tonight. But
we’ll remember in November. Thank you.

    MR. SASLOW:

George Ferrell from Coal-Mac, Inc.

    MR. FERRELL:

First of all, I want you to realize I do support the Spruce permit. I would like to ask who all here is from southern West Virginia? Who all here has lived here in the 1960s in southern West Virginia? Who all lives here now? I did then and I do now. My name is George Ferrell and I’m from Chapmanville. Lived here all my life. I'm 64 years and I was in the Air Force. I'm proud to be an employee of Arch Coal, a mine in southern West Virginia, a veteran, a Christian, an Eagle Scout.

    I think it's important to note with all your talk for us people. I believe you’re to trust that person. But the more you know and believe the person. I always believe people with great reservations you will do the right things and make the right decisions. You see, I was raised here. It was not fit to fish or boating. Now today there are many species of fish. People boat. And believe it or not swim in the river. The state realized what was going on and what needed to be done to correct the problem. Pollution from mines were harming the rivers. But two
of our own counties had gas stations dumped their waste oil, tires and such in the river. How do I know this? Because I was a scout and took two trips down there. Since then different organizations, we corrected that. We made changes. I believe we can make changes now and sustain our livelihood too, and maintain our life as we done three years ago. We can do it today.

MR. SASLOW:

589, Allen Johnson, Christians for the Mountains.

MR. JOHNSON:

Thank you. I'm Allen Johnson, a resident of beautiful West Virginia, 37 years. I've trained in science and geology and cofounder of Christians for the Mountains. Our key Scripture, Psalms 24:1 which basically says the earth and all that is in it belongs to God. And I support the veto of Spruce Number One permit.

I want to point out that the United States military budget is about $700 billion. The EPA is about home defense, defending West Virginia and our nation from harm. Current mining practices destroys ecosystems and so on. A trust given to us by God to use wisely, sustainably, and reverently. And almost
everybody in this nation without direct economic interests agree with this.

   But let us not be deluded that king coal is our state benefactory savior. Not with somebody granting a state by quality of life industry puts West Virginia ---. Central to this economy, lots of work. Cotton, there's something terribly wrong with how cotton was harvested, by slave labor.

   Well, what we are addressing at this era is how coal is harvested and whether pollution should be tolerated as a political, economic trump card or whether life science and moral consideration to protect God's creation will prevail. Please sustain this veto and thank you.

   MR. SASLOW:
   Ms. Chasity Mullins
   
   MS. MULLINS:
   Hi, I’m Chasity Mullins. The impact on our community will be overwhelmed. According to the 2009 national mining association report, mountaintop mining provides 14,000 direct jobs and 50,000 indirect jobs in Appalachia. Mountaintop mining has economic impact with an estimate of $12 to $15 million of federal taxes each year. Environmentalists contend that this is only about mountaintop removal, but that
is not true. This is an attack on coal mines, you will never be on the same level as all these great miners standing before you. Do the right thing. Protect our valuable resource. Protect the miner.

MR. SASLOW:

Thank you so much. I would now call 601 to 622 to go to the gold curtain. If anybody else would like to speak what you think. With that, let's go to Barbara Altizer, Eastern Coal Council.

MS. ALTIZER:

Hi, I'm Barbara Altizer. I'm with the Eastern Coal Council. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in regard to Spruce Number One Mine in Logan County, West Virginia. EPA has stated its plan to begin the veto process for the surface mine permit already granted and approved by the Army Corps, by EPA, and other regulatory agencies. Today when American jobs are hard to come by, EPA is actually beginning the process of destroying coal mining and mining-related jobs seems mind boggling, particularly as our country is struggling to create jobs.

I implore EPA's input, to correctly review the environmental impact before issuing it. This action that you're taking disregards the expertise of the people involved in the process