EBINDIV

Rochester Community Schools

Hugger Elementary

Mrs. Adams' Fourth Grade Class
Hugger Elementary School
Rochester, MI 48306
May 24, 2008

Mr. Joe Knollenberg
2349 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Knollenberg:

We are fourth grade students at Hugger Elementary and we have learned that Mountaintop Removal being done by mining companies in West Virginia and other states is harmful to the people, the environment, and is in conflict with many of the Core Democratic Values that our country is based upon. We are writing to ask you for your help in stopping companies who mine through mountaintops by creating new laws and working to enforce existing laws such as the Clean Water Act that make it illegal to do so.

Mountaintop Removal is a form of mining that is extreme, dangerous, and destructive. Mining companies blow the tops off of mountain ranges to get to the coal underneath. The destroyed mountaintops are then dumped into low lying areas and valleys which ruin habitats, kill animals and fish, drive people away from their unsafe communities, and turn rivers into sludge (www.stopmountaintopremoval.org). More than 1,200 miles of streams have already been destroyed according to the Environmental Protection Agency (www.action.earthjustice.org). According to the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, at least 500 square miles (in West Virginia alone) of temperate jungles which had provided homes to a wide variety of wildlife have been destroyed forever (www.ohvec.org). Additionally, Mountaintop Removal currently occurs in West Virginia, Kentucky, Southern Virginia, and eastern Tennessee (www.stopmountaintopremoval.org).

The United States is based on Core Democratic Values from our Constitution. Mountaintop Removal conflicts with some of our most important Core Democratic Values. For example, permanently destroying habitats, streams, and communities, is not in the interest of the Common Good which states that the government should do things that are good for everybody. Another example is when aquifers become poisoned as a result of Mountaintop Removal waste being dumped into streams, it negatively affects the Core Democratic Value of Life-the right to live safely, without harm from others. Also, the Core Democratic Value of the Pursuit of Happiness is violated when entire communities of both people and wildlife are harmed or destroyed by flooding caused by Mountaintop Removal waste. Finally, the Core Democratic Value of

Justice is not upheld. It appears that mining companies are being favored over the people and wildlife that inhabit mining areas.

With permission from the photographer, we have enclosed a picture of the result of Mountaintop Removal in West Virginia. It appears as a scar on the otherwise breathtaking landscape.

In closing, we, the fourth graders in Mrs. Adams' class ask you to do everything you can to create laws and support current and potential legislation such as the Clean Water Act and the Clean Water Protection Act that will make Mountaintop Removal illegal so that this terrible destruction will end. By doing so, you will honor the Core Democratic Values that are so important to the United States.

Sincerely,

Lillian Baron

Jaydan Skidmore

Leia Stephan

Ben Porter

Douglas Westerfield

Amanda Nowacki

Joyce Yu

Candace Wivel

Marissa Westfield

Vanessa Craig

Austin Cassdvoy

Levi Pringint

Morgan Formicola

Gabe

Oliver

Jay Gretzinger

Michelle Eckardt

Daniel

Don't damantin top removel. Thanks

Alex Brandon

Nick Renke

Jonathan Daugher



Mountaintop removal coal mine in southern WV encroaching on a small community.
Photo by Vivian Stockman