MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING MUST END

We need to make sure coal is mined responsibly, burned cleanly, and does not contribute to global warming.

Working together, we can end the destructive practice of mountaintop removal coal mining, and stop big energy companies from walking away with billions in profit—while leaving nothing but a leveled mountain moonscape and valleys and streams filled with mining rubble.

Too many communities in Appalachia have already paid a heavy price in polluted drinking water, flooded towns, damaged homes, and destroyed lives.

ALTERNATIVES TO COAL

The U.S. Department of Energy has found that the Appalachian region has extensive wind energy resources. However, as mountaintop removal destroys peaks and ridges, it also destroys the wind potential of those areas. People in Appalachia deserve clean energy sources that provide them with safe, long-term green jobs.

In West Virginia, an increase in mountaintop removal mining operations has meant a decrease in jobs as people are replaced with machines. Though coal production has steadily increased, mining jobs have fallen from 130,000 in 1940 to 17,000 in 2007. Photo: Mark Schmerling

MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING

DESTROYING APPALACHIA
ONE MOUNTAIN AT A TIME

SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Learn more about mountaintop removal coal mining and take action: **www.sierraclub.org/MTR**
- Get in touch with the Sierra Club Coal Campaign: **www.sierraclub.org/coal**
- If you live in a state affected by mountaintop removal coal mining, get in touch with your local Sierra Club Chapter: **www.sierraclub.org**
- Learn more about Environmental Justice: **http://www.sierraclub.org/ej**
- Find out your connection to mountaintop removal by entering your zip code at **www.ilovemountains.org**
- Write a letter about mountaintop removal coal mining to your local newspaper and urge people to move beyond coal to a cleaner, safer energy future.

www.sierraclub.org/mtr

WHAT IS MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING?

Mountaintop removal coal mining is exactly what it sounds like: mining companies blow up ancient, forested mountains to extract the underlying coal, and then dump the mining waste into adjacent valleys – turning wild mountains into polluted wastelands, destroying watersheds, and severely impacting nearby communities.

Mountaintop removal is prevalent in the Appalachian region of the U.S., covering Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Virginia.

HOW DOES MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL AFFECT ME?

You may not know it, but the electricity that powers our homes and businesses often comes from mountaintop removal coal – and at a tremendous cost to the people and land in Appalachia.

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED TO MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING, AND WE NEED TO END THIS CONTROVERSIAL PRACTICE NOW.

Photo: Coal River Mountain, which has wind power potential but is threatened by mountaintop removal coal mining.

A "reclaimed" mountain, 8 years after mining has occurred.

THE IMPACT OF MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING

Mountaintop removal is an extremely destructive form of coal mining. After clear-cutting all the timber and destroying the undergrowth, mining companies push millions of tons of waste rock and top soil into the valleys below, permanently burying streams. Many of these mined areas are also the source of millions of people's drinking water.

This devastating practice poisons drinking water, lays waste to wildlife habitat, increases risk of flooding, and wipes out entire communities.

According to a 2005 Environmental Impact Statement, mountaintop removal coal mining has buried and contaminated more than 2,000 miles of streams in Appalachia – and many more miles have been buried since then.

- The study also estimated that past and future mining could destroy more than 1.4 million acres of forested mountains.
- Appalachia is home to an incredibly diverse array of animal and plant life; mountaintop removal threatens over 240 species.
- By the end of this century, more than 2,200 square miles of Appalachian forests and mountains will be gone unless we act now.

"These companies come in and blow apart our land for profit, and meanwhile, …communities are torn apart by poverty and unemployment. The people here are treated like their land doesn't matter, like their lives don't matter."

–Ann League,
activist in Campbell County, Tenn., for Save Our Cumberland Mountains

Kayford Mountain, WV, has been almost entirely destroyed by mountaintop removal coal mining. The unmined portion belongs to longtime activist Larry Gibson, whose family has lived on Kayford for 200 years. Photo: Mark Schmerling

"At 40 years old I can think of 10 communities in Boone County [West Virginia] that have literally been destroyed. I've seen the elders with tears running down their faces, knowing their homes are gone."

–Maria Gunnoe,
resident of southern West Virginia and
organizer for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

A series of "blast holes" where ammonium nitrate and diesel fuel is placed and ignited, sending rock and debris flying. People living as far as 12 miles from mining sites have reported hearing the blasts.

MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL COAL MINING AFFECTS NEARBY COMMUNITIES

Mountaintop removal operations frequently contaminate local water sources. They release heavy metals such as arsenic, lead, mercury, and selenium, which are known to cause cancer, birth defects, and neurological disorders. The waste created from processing the mined coal - known as coal sludge - poses a severe threat to the health, safety and lives of local residents.

Coal waste is stored in massive artificial ponds and lakes, which are located dangerously close to schools, businesses, and homes:

- In 1972, a waste pond failed at Buffalo Creek in Logan County, W.V., causing a flood that killed 125 people, injured 1,000 others, and left 4,000 people homeless.
- In 2000, a waste pond failed in Inez, Ky., spilling more than 300 million gallons of pollutants into local waterways.
- People are still in danger today. In Sundial, W.V., an elementary school sits just 400 yards downhill from a coal waste lake containing 2.8 billion gallons of toxic sludge.