

To my Congressional Representatives:

I am writing to support the proposed legislation H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act, which will enable the Waste Coal Refuse Power Plants to continue their efficient efforts to clean our water and air resources.

I represent the Trout Run Watershed Association which is located on the Eastern Continental Divide in Western Pennsylvania. The location is important for several reasons: 1) Everyone from Pennsylvania to Mississippi is down stream from us, 2) our 5 miles of stream contains over 18 piles of waste coal left over from 2 major deep coal mines and many family run slope mines. These waste piles contain the dirty coal that the steel mills and power plants would not take. There are millions of tons of this waste coal on our watershed alone: 3) when it rains or the snow melts, these waste coal piles are contaminating our Trout Run water with infiltration containing numerous contaminants including lead, copper, aluminum, arsenic, chromium, cadmium, sulfur and others which destroy the quality of the water that runs the entire length of the stream and rivers to the Gulf of Mexico; 4) if left alone these piles will eventually self ignite and burn, releasing these heavy metals to the atmosphere, destroying the air quality.

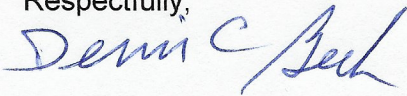
Proof of this is the EPA study that found the town with the highest level of lead in the U.S. in their soil was Cresson, PA. just 8 miles downwind from Portage.

We encourage you to support the waste coal burning plants in cleaning up the millions of tons of this waste coal and returning those areas to usable, clean, environmentally safe areas for fishing and recreation at an efficient cost to the government. These waste coal piles will not be there forever, so the cost to the government will be limited. In Pennsylvania the waste coal burning plants have cleaned up about half of the 550 million tons of waste coal and reclaimed over 7200 acres of land and 225 miles of streams.

We live here and see the effects of this contamination and the effects it has on our community's health, economics and recreational opportunities every day.

We appreciate your support for H.R. 4735.

Respectfully,



Denis C. Beck

Chairman, Trout Run Watershed Association