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Federal Court Blocks Interior Department Attempt to Address Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining

Bold Action Needed to End Destruction, Fully Protect Communities and Streams

Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia today rejected an attempt by the Department of Interior to reverse the Bush Administration's devastating last-minute weakening of the stream buffer zone rule, a key protection for waterways near mountaintop removal coal mines. A coalition of organizations including the Sierra Club had challenged the Bush Administration's actions and had praised the Department of Interior for attempting to reverse the rule.

In response to today's announcement, **Sierra Club Environmental Quality Program Director Ed Hopkins** issued the following statement:

"Today's federal court decision is unfortunate, and it shows that it will take bold action to truly end mountaintop removal coal mining. We praise the Department of Interior's efforts to address this most destructive form of coal mining by focusing on stream impacts, but only a comprehensive effort by the Obama administration will bring true relief to Appalachian communities.

"When Secretary of the Interior Salazar first announced his intent to reverse the Bush-era rule, he said that it alone would not be enough to completely end mountaintop removal coal mining. Restoring the previous stream buffer zone regulation remains one component in the complex effort to end mountaintop removal coal mining. But with the administration currently considering more than 80 permit applications for new mountaintop removal coal mining, it will take policy changes at the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and Environmental Protection Agency, along with tough enforcement, to end the destruction completely and protect Appalachian communities.

"Mining companies have already buried close to 2,000 miles of Appalachian streams beneath piles of toxic waste and debris. Serious steps to end mountaintop removal coal mining would support clean energy solutions in Appalachia and create good, green jobs in America."

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**RAW: Uncooked Truth,
Beyond Belief.**



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