From: Ann Campbell
To: Jeffrey Lapp; John Forren; John Pomponio
Subject: Fw: Article in today's Bluefield Daily Telegraph- King Coal Highway
Date: 05/05/2009 09:11 AM

This article suggests that the State highways Secretary is also attending. Can we confirm?

What do we know about the Virginia highway example cited in the article?

----- Forwarded by Ann Campbell/DC/USEPA/US on 05/05/2009 09:10 AM -----

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Date: 05/05/2009 06:53 AM
Subject: Article in today's Bluefield Daily Telegraph- King Coal Highway

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Mountaintop mining could pave way for King Coal

By SAMANTHA PERRY
Bluefield Daily Telegraph

BLUEFIELD — The future of a roadbed for the King Coal Highway could be paved via mountaintop mining — if a federal crackdown on the mining practice doesn't stall construction.

Gov. Joe Manchin and a contingent of state officials will travel to the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office in Philadelphia on Wednesday when Consolidated Coal Company files a permit for mountaintop mining in Mingo County. The post-mining land use at the site would be a roadbed for the King Coal Highway, Manchin told the Daily Telegraph during a telephone interview Monday afternoon.

"There can be a balance between the economy and the environment," Manchin said, noting he wants to continue to "create jobs" and "build revenue" in West Virginia.

Mountaintop mining had been in the spotlight in recent months, with the Obama administration taking steps just last week to reverse a ruling from the Bush era that allowed mountaintop mining waste to be dumped near streams. In March, the EPA also announced it was cracking down on mountaintop mining by taking a closer look at 150 to 200 permits that had been issued for the practice.

Dialogue between Manchin and EPA officials about mountaintop mining has been ongoing, Matt Turner, spokesman for the governor, said.

Turner said the governor is concerned about the potential impact to the state from the mountaintop mining permitting process.

The mountaintop mining permit for which Consolidated Coal will file Wednesday affects the Buffalo Mountain section of the King Coal Highway. Plans are for the coal company to lay the roadbed of this section of the highway — located between Corridor G (U.S. 119) and U.S. Route 52 outside of Delbarton in Mingo County — after completing its mining operation.

Public-private partnerships between the Commonwealth of Virginia and coal companies have been used in the neighboring state to help with the construction of the Coalfields Expressway in Buchanan County.

State Highways Secretary Paul Mattox and state DEP Secretary Randy Huffman are among those who will travel with Manchin when Consolidated Coal files for the permit.

When completed, the King Coal Highway will travel 95 miles through Mingo, Wayne, Wyoming, McDowell and Mercer counties with the Tolsia segment from Williamson to Huntington extending another 55 miles. It will interchange with the Coalfields Expressway in Welch near the Indian Ridge Industrial Park and the site of the new federal prison.

The King Coal and Tolsia Highways represent the West Virginia corridors of Interstate 73/74.

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