From: John Forren
To: John Pomponio; Ann Campbell; Gregory Peck
Subject: Fw: WV news on Governers visit yesterday
Date: 05/07/2009 01:19 PM

»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»»
John Forren
USEPA Region III Office of Monitoring & Assessment
Sent from EPA's Wireless Services

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▼ Bette Conway

----- Original Message -----
From: Bette Conway
Sent: 05/07/2009 01:12 PM EDT
To: Evelyn MacKnight; John Forren; Jessica Martinsen; Jeffrey Lapp; Francisco Cruz; Chad Harsh; Stefania Shamet
Subject: WV news on Governers visit yesterday

Wednesday May 6, 2009

Manchin meets with EPA over mining permit
by The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Gov. Joe Manchin met with federal officials Wednesday to clarify the Environmental Protection Agency's intentions about permits that would allow mining operators to fill valleys with debris left over from mining.

The EPA announced in March that it wanted to review 150 to 200 permits where fills could violate the federal Clean Water Act because they would bury streams.

Manchin's meeting with acting EPA Region III administrator William Early focused on a Consol Energy permit application for a mine in Mingo County. The permit was among those EPA said it wanted to review, said Kathy Cosco, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection.

In its application, Consol planned to reclaim part of the operation by building five miles of rough roadbed for the King Coal Highway rather than returning the land to its former state. The road is to run from Bluefield to Williamson and eventually become part of the planned Interstate 73/74 corridor.

The proposed stretch could end up saving the state millions of dollars in construction and rights of way costs, said Brent Walker, a spokesman for the state Department of Transportation. The highway's route was realigned to accommodate the project.

If approved, it would be the second time post mining reclamation resulted in a stretch of roadway bed for the planned 90-mile King Coal route.

Manchin's office released a statement saying no decisions were made Wednesday, but everyone agreed to work in an "expedited manner."

Wednesday's trip is Manchin's second visit with federal officials to discuss federal actions involving the mining industry. He met in March with the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Accompanying Manchin Wednesday were DEP Secretary Randy Huffman and Transportation Secretary Paul Mattox.

Manchin spokesman Matt Turner said the governor is concerned that EPA's decision to review mountaintop removal and other mining permits could become too far reaching and interfere with projects considered beneficial to the state.

Coal operators have said EPA's review and the Department of Interior announcement last month that it would seek to revoke a Bush-era rule involving the deposit of rocks and dirt from mining operations near streams are creating uncertainty in the industry.

EPA spokeswoman Donna Heron did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

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