

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

October 1, 2010

Dear Senator Cardin:

We are writing on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP). Founded in 1951, the SSSP is an interdisciplinary professional association of scholars, practitioners, and students interested in the application of scientific and humanistic perspectives to the study of vital social problems. From time to time, our membership votes on resolutions addressing social issues of concern to the society and its members. At our annual meeting in Atlanta this year, the SSSP membership voted unanimously in support of the attached resolution, endorsing the Clean Water Protection Act [HR 1310] and requesting that special attention be given to workers and their families affected by the decline of and other social problems connected to extractive mining.

Our resolution process is a demanding one. We require individuals submitting resolutions to provide members, well in advance of the vote, with the necessary information required for a thoughtful and informed vote. Members have plenty of time as well to do their own research. In this case, the proponents of this resolution exceeded our expectations and even provided the membership with a lengthy reading list on the subject. The time and effort that they put into the process is reflected in the resolution. We should add that the membership asked for modifications of the original resolution.

We hope that you will support this very important bill. If you have any questions about the resolution or if we can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would love to hear from you either way, to ensure that you received this letter and resolution, and to learn where you stand on this issue at this point in time.

Sincerely,



JoAnn L. Miller, Ph. D.
President



Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.
Executive Officer

Enclosure

RESOLUTION: To officially endorse the Clean Water Protection Act [HR 1310]

Whereas many communities' health and wellbeing depend upon the ecological functioning and purity of the water system that has its headwaters in the mountains of Appalachia, and over 1,200 miles of streams have already been impacted by mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) (United States Environmental Protection Agency 2005),

Whereas MTR has impacted more than one million acres of land and more than 500 mountains in the Central Appalachian states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia (Geredien 2009), and the number of permits for new MTR mines continues to rise,

Whereas MTR has many devastating consequences for residents living in communities down-valley from these mining operations, including massive flooding (Flood Advisory Technical Taskforce 2002); coal slurry impoundment breaks and disasters (Erikson 1976, Scott et al. 2005); respiratory problems from coal dust in the air (Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition 2005); and well water contamination consisting of heavy metals (present in coal) and carcinogenic chemicals used in the coal cleaning process (Orem 2006),

Whereas the Appalachian Regional Commission reports that in 2000, more than 75% of Appalachian coal counties were classified as "economically distressed," d