

Dear Friends,

Please endorse the Appalachian Communities Health Emergency (ACHE) Act, H.R. 2073.

Dozens of peer-reviewed scientific studies show mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mining to be a human health crisis for communities within several miles of the operations, which typically use the daily equivalent of a “mother of all bombs” at each blasting site. The fine and ultrafine silica dust, a known carcinogen, and other blasting fallout drifts for miles downwind, where it enters residents’ lungs, bloodstreams, and wombs.

Dr. Michael Hendryx, the lead researcher on most of the existing health studies, powerfully delivered his TEDMed Talk, “The shocking danger of mountaintop removal – and why it must end” (which you can view here: <https://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=689121>).

In April of 2019, the ACHE Act received a legislative hearing by the House Natural Resources subcommittee of Energy and Mineral Resources. In his testimony at that hearing, Dr. Michael McCawley of West Virginia University’s School of Public Health testified that the data on elevated dust levels should be considered causal to the elevated rates of disease, not merely correlational (see: <https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/health-and-environmental-impacts-of-mountaintop-removal-mining>).

As well as being a deadly public health threat, mountaintop removal contributes to the climate crisis by slashing and burning carbon-sink forests while extracting climate-killing coal. Employing few people while causing great damage, mountaintop removal should be low-hanging fruit in combating climate change. Passing the ACHE Act would be a badly needed victory with profound lifesaving results.

The ACHE Act would:

- ★ Require the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to study the health impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining on individuals in impacted communities in Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would then determine whether such mining presents any health risks to individuals in those communities.
- ★ Prohibit authorization for any mountaintop removal coal mining project or expansion under the Clean Water Act or the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) unless HHS determines that such mining does not present any health risk.
- ★ Require monitoring of air, water, and soil for pollution, including noise pollution, until HHS makes its determination. HHS must publish pollution monitoring results.
- ★ Require the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement of the Department of the Interior to assess a one-time fee upon surface mining projects, sufficient to cover the federal cost of the studies and pollution monitoring required by this bill.

Please fill out this form with the name and position of the person endorsing, your organization, and city/state. Thank you for taking this stand.

Sincerely,
The ACHE Campaign