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Full Press Packet Available Here: <http://www.theallianceforappalachia.org/2010-end-mtr-press-release>

Not One More Mountain! Americans from Across the U.S. Ask Congress and Obama To End Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining in 2010

WASHINGTON DC – March 6-10th, 2010 – During the 5th Annual End Mountaintop Removal Week in Washington, over 200 citizens from across the United States will be uniting in the nation's capitol to demand the end to mountaintop removal coal mining, one of the most urgent environmental and social justice issues facing America today.

Residents from Appalachia who are living with the impacts of mountaintop removal will work with Americans from thirty states to promote legislative action on the Clean Water Protection Act (HR 1310) and the Appalachia Restoration Act (S 696), bills that would severely curtail mountaintop mining by ending valley fills. Citizens will also be continuing pressure on the Obama administration and federal agencies including the EPA and the OSMRE asking for immediate administration action - including enforcement of existing laws.

"It is time to pass this bill and move forward into a new economy, a green economy with local jobs that last," said David Beaty a member of Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment in Tennessee.

"When we go to Washington, D.C. the politicians hear our stories. They understand that we are fighting to protect the health of our people, to provide much-needed employment for our future generations, and to preserve our Appalachian culture and heritage. We know that coal will not last forever and we need to be prepared for a clean, just future in Appalachia," said Jane Branham, nurse and secretary of the Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards based in Southwest Virginia.

Mountaintop removal coal mining is an extremely destructive form of strip mining found in central Appalachia, with some mines larger than Washington, DC. For End Mountaintop Removal Week in Washington 2009, nearly 200 from up to thirty states will meet with staff, Representatives, and Senators, and send a simple message: co-sponsor and pass the Clean Water Protection Act (H.R. 1310) in the House and the Appalachia Restoration Act (S696) in the Senate. These bills would outlaw the practice of "valley-fills"—the dumping of debris from mining into nearby streams – an important first step towards ending mountaintop removal coal mining. The Clean Water Protection Act currently has 264 co-sponsors – and the Appalachia Restoration Act has ten.

"The folks in Kentucky are trying to get clean water, clean air and to keep our homeland from being blasted away by mountain bombing, and we are not being heard. We people of Central

Appalachia have no where left to go. We're coming to D.C. as a last hope for clean water, for our mountains, and for our future," said Mickey McCoy, a Kentuckians For The Commonwealth member from Martin County Kentucky.

While many local coalfield politicians have been resistant to the concerns of local citizens, there is a sign that their message is finally getting through – in December, Senate legend Robert Byrd noted that the majority of Congress opposes the practice of mountaintop removal and that the coal industry should embrace change.

On Tuesday, March 9th The Alliance for Appalachia and over a dozen ally groups are hosting a call in day, where thousands who are unable to travel to Washington, D.C. will contact their legislators and urge support of the bills. Coalfield advocates charge that mountaintop removal coal mining has had a direct impact on human health in the region, turning tap water orange and even black. 500 of the oldest mountains on the continent have been flattened, even as 90% of traditional deep mining jobs have been lost; communities around strip-mining have some of the highest poverty rates in America. A million acres of forest have been clear-cut, and according to a 2001 EPA estimate, 1200 miles of pristine headwater streams have been buried and polluted.

Numerous recent studies, including a recent article in *Science* magazine by 12 independent scientists have shown that the impacts of mountaintop removal mining are "pervasive and irreversible," and that "regulators should no longer ignore rigorous science." These studies have drawn the attention of outlets from the *New York Times* to *The Colbert Report* - and the outrage of citizens across the United States who want this practice ended immediately.

Maria Gunnoe, a community organizer with Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and winner of the prestigious 2009 Goldman Award added, "It's time that the Obama administration and the federal agencies admit the problems with MTR. The science alone is enough to immediately take the measure to stop this attack on our land and to protect the people living in these mountains. We are smarter than this – we can have energy without poisoning water and destroying land and resources that belongs to our future generations."

The 2010 End Mountaintop Removal Week in Washington is hosted by The Alliance for Appalachia, a regional coalition of 13 groups in five states working to end mountaintop removal coal mining and support the creation of a just, sustainable economy in Appalachia. Members include: Coal River Mountain Watch, SouthWings, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, SOCM- Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, The Appalachian Citizens Law Center, Appalshop, Heartwood, Mountain Association for Community Economic Development and Appalachian Voices.

See www.iLoveMountains.org for more information on the Clean Water Protection Act (HR 1310), the Appalachia Restoration Act (S 696) and the End Mountaintop Removal Week in Washington.

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