



Citizens Coal Council

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GROUPS DEMAND THAT BUSH OUST #2 AT INTERIOR OVER ETHICS VIOLATIONS

*RELEASE DOCUMENTS REVEALING J. STEVEN GRILES INVOLVED IN DECISIONS
BENEFITING ENERGY COMPANIES THAT WERE HIS CLIENTS*

Washington, D.C. – Friends of the Earth and the Citizens Coal Council today called on President Bush to fire J. Steven Griles, a former energy lobbyist who is now Deputy Secretary of the Interior Department, for violating his ethics agreement. The groups cited calendars they obtained under the Freedom of Information Act showing that Griles met with his former energy company clients and worked on particular issues that benefit them.

Griles was a lobbyist for over 40 coal, oil, gas and electric companies and trade associations before President Bush named him to the Interior post. Griles sold his lobbying firm and signed a recusal agreement pledging that while at Interior he would not be involved in “any particular matter involving specific parties in which any of my former clients is or represents a party.”

In May 2002, Friends of the Earth caught Griles violating his recusal agreement after he attempted to pressure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to change its analysis criticizing a coal bed methane project in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana. Before his appointment to the Interior Department, Griles worked as a lobbyist on behalf of several coal bed methane companies involved in drilling gas wells on public lands in the basin.

“Once again we’ve caught Griles lobbying and meeting with his corporate polluter buddies and violating his ethics agreement,” said Kristen Sykes, Interior Department Watchdog for Friends of the Earth. “President Bush should clean up the dirty corporate influence at the Interior Department by firing Griles immediately.”

Doyle Coakley, Chairman of the Citizens Coal Council and a resident of West Virginia, said: “Griles is another example of a backroom dealer in the Bush administration who thumbs his nose at the public trust and helps greedy coal companies damage the environment. The president must get rid of people who have conflicts of interest. We deserve honest government, not government by and for the big energy companies.”

In the 1990s, Griles represented several coal mining interests including Arch Coal, the National Mining Association and Pittston Coal Company. Many of these companies are clients of National Environmental Strategies, which bought out J. Steven Griles and Associates and retained Griles as a vice principal and lobbyist. The firm is paying Griles \$284,000 a year over the next four years for the sale of his client base.

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DETAILS OF GRILES MEETINGS WITH ENERGY COMPANIES

The calendars that Friends of the Earth and the Citizens Coal Council obtained show that from July 27, 2001, to February 20, 2002, Deputy Secretary of the Interior J. Steven Griles:

- Met at least seven times with his former clients, including the National Mining Association and the Edison Electric Institute, and at least once with his former lobbying firm, National Environmental Strategies.
- Met at least 15 times with either companies that belong to the National Mining Association or with administration officials to discuss issues concerning those members; including nine meetings with or about Peabody Energy and two meetings with the West Virginia Coal Association, a proponent of mountaintop removal mining,
- Met at least 16 times with former industry clients and administration officials to discuss the rollback of air pollution standards for power plants, oil refineries and industrial boilers. Discussions included the New Source Review rule, pending air pollution legislation and issues such as mercury.
- Met at least 12 times with administration officials and coal companies to discuss mountaintop removal strip mining. In May, the Army Corps of Engineers and EPA issued a major rule that weakened the Clean Water Act rules. The new rule legalizes the longstanding practice of mountain top removal mines that dump millions of tons of mining waste into streams. A federal judge, however, has blocked this rule from taking effect at coal mines in Kentucky and West Virginia.