

## Statement by Nanette Nelson

My name is Nanette Nelson and I live on Big Coal River in Boone County. I want you to know that I am not against coal mining. There is a long history of coal mining in my family. My grandfather was a blacksmith and shod ponies for the mines. My dad worked for Armco Steel for many years. He also worked for a small company called Cameo. He worked in the mines in the 30's 40's and 50's. My husband also worked in the mines for many years. So you can see that I know a little bit about what it is like to be so connected with the mining industry. There has been a lot of change in the industry in all of those years, from the change in the equipment in the mines to the method of mining itself. However one thing has not changed. That is the attitude of the mining companies. They have always thought of themselves as all powerful. They have changed some of their tactics though. They have always said that if they had to follow laws and rules that they would have to go out of business. The difference now is that they use their workers to fight for them. That's a new tactic. They also have a front seat in the government, state and federal. Since they have this seat now, they are in a position to have any kind of regulation that they don't like changed. This is a dangerous thing. We all have laws that we have to live by. Society cannot exist without them. The environmental laws were written to protect mankind. I know that the industry laughs and makes light of these laws by saying that we want to protect bats and newts and lizards and whatever else they can come up with to make these rules sound ridiculous, but the truth is this, if the environment cannot support these creatures, the environment is becoming dangerous for man. The scientific data proves this, but this administration doesn't like this data. They have gotten rid of scientists that have given the warning and replaced them with "scientists" that will tickle their ears and that won't pose a threat to the industrial backers of this administration. Folks we need to wake up and look around us. The environment in the state and all of Appalachia is threatened. We have suffered from terrible floods and disasters here and it is getting worse. I know that we have to have coal. We can't do without it, but we can't live without clean water and air, and we can't live with the constant threat of communities being flooded, the loss of personal property, and yes the loss of life itself.

We are going to have to look toward the future. What is the future going to be like for our children and our grandchildren? From what I have seen even with the laws that we have, from the destruction of our streams to the destruction of our forests, and the slow death of our small communities, I can't imagine what the future will be like for the generations to come. We have to protect the resources that we have. I am against changing the buffer zone ruling. Please keep the buffer zone intact. Protect our children and our communities.

You know, I'm a history buff. I've studied a lot about the great civilizations and empires of the past. One of the greatest was the Roman Empire, which conquered most of the known world at the time. They thought that they were invincible, but they crumbled and fell. There were several reasons for this. Their military decisions, their greed and debauchery, and lead. And you know that I'm not talking about bullets. Their eating utensils and cooking pots contained lead. That was one of the things that weaken their people physically and mentally. They unknowingly poisoned themselves. We have an

advantage over them. We have science to let us know what is harmful and what is not. The United States is only 2 centuries old. I can already see some of the things that caused the downfall of the Romans going on here now, the hunger for greed and for power, to the poisoning of our people. I have always heard that to know the future look to the past. Let's look to the past and learn from it and not repeat it.

Nanette Nelson

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