



# Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

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Dear Neighbor,

Are you affected by, or concerned about black, orange, or smelly water in streams and in the well water you drink and run your household with? Are you concerned about high cancer rates in your community, or know people suffering from stomach, gallbladder, or liver problems?

As West Virginians we are concerned for the quality of our waters and our state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). When the DEP doesn't operate well, we lose our health, and our state misses out on millions of dollars.

In the article attached you can read how the Federal EPA settled with just one company for **more than \$20 million. That money could have gone to our state instead of a federal agency.** We need a strong DEP if we are going to provide clean water, good jobs, a healthy environment, and protection for the state's most important asset: Our children's future.

## **We need your help**

In February a State Senate committee hearing will be held to address these issues with the DEP. We want to make sure citizen voices are heard and that real improvements are made.

We are petitioning the state legislature to make the following mandates to strengthen our DEP:

- Fill the 100 job vacancies in the DEP (According to DEP Office of Administration);
- Investigate why DEP missed so many citations for violations of water pollution permits;
- Postpone all permits that allow waste or pollution to be dumped into our streams until the DEP can adequately monitor the impact and enforce the law.

Last March 50 OVEC members joined together to pass legislation that forced the DEP to study coal sludge. We know we can make a difference and help the DEP carry out their mission, because we have done it before.

**Help us meet our goal of 1000 people on the petition before the hearing this February. We are urging the WV Legislature to make the DEP a stronger agency for the people.**

Thank you,

Donna Branham, Mingo County Resident

To sign the petition on line or to print out more petition sheets for your community, please go to [www.ohvec.org/safewaterstrongdep](http://www.ohvec.org/safewaterstrongdep) or call Patricia at 304-235-2618

Please mail petitions to PO Box 212 Rawl, WV 25691

# \$20M Pollution Fines: State misses out

January 17, 2008

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The country's fourth-largest coal producer, Massey Energy Co., will pay a \$20 million fine as part of a settlement with the [federal] government over allegations it routinely polluted hundreds of streams and waterways in West Virginia and Kentucky with sediment-filled waste water and coal slurry.

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The agreement settled a complaint filed by the EPA in May 2007 alleging that the company violated the federal Clean Water Act on at least 4,500 occasions between January 2000 and the end of 2006 by discharging mining waste and sediment -- including hazardous metals -- into hundreds of streams and waterways and failing to control spills of coal slurry during its mining operation.

Some of the waste water discharges were more than 10 times the amounts allowed by state permits, the EPA said.

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The maximum penalties facing the company for the thousands of violations and days when permits were exceeded could have been as high as **\$2.4 billion**, according to the EPA.

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The settlement concludes an EPA investigation of more than two years of Massey's mining operation. The complaint filed last May alleged that Massey routinely released metals, sediment and acid mine drainage into streams and rivers.

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And investigators found that Massey's operations failed to control spills of coal slurry, containing sediment and metals, allowing it to clog streams and harm fish habitat.

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**Imagine what \$2.4 Billion dollars could do for the communities who are paying the highest price for these spills... Please sign the petition strengthen our state and ensure clean healthy water for our children.**