



WEST VIRGINIA CHAMBER

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500 Coal Miners Are Newest Victims In Ongoing ‘War On Coal/Energy’

By: Steve Roberts

Yesterday’s announcement by Consol Energy to issue a federal WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) notice that will affect nearly 500 coal miners and others in Clay and Nicholas Counties ([click to read announcement](#)) is a clear example of the devastation that ongoing environmental actions will have on workers and communities across our state. The “war on coal/domestic energy” is hitting home in West Virginia.

Not only will this shut-down cost these jobs, but in Clay County alone the closure of this mine, by some estimates, will cut school funding by up to 25 percent...and dramatically increase unemployment there (which currently stands at 14.6 percent).

Other mining operators in the state are reviewing future viability due to EPA’s mine permit review process and other federal anti-coal actions. Workers at Arch Coal’s Mingo Logan Spruce No. 1 mine face uncertainty due to an EPA announcement in mid-October that it was initiating a process to veto the issuance of the mine’s 404 water discharge permit.

Unless something changes, I suspect that yesterday’s announcement by Consol will be what is in store for many counties and communities in the southern half of our state. Coal operators will not be able to employ miners, produce coal and generate tax revenues if mine permits are revoked or disallowed.

Making matters worse, the EPA on Monday declared that greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, “threaten the public health and welfare of the American people.” The announcement is the prerequisite for “strong new emissions standards,” which are the actual words of the EPA. Federal bureaucrats, with the backing of the Obama Administration, are marching along in their efforts to restructure our nation’s energy use and impose higher energy costs on all Americans.

Anyone who works in the state’s coal, natural gas, electricity and manufacturing industries should be truly concerned. West Virginia’s future is at risk, and its workers and families need our state’s leaders in Washington to help stop this assault.

Senator Byrd, W.Va. Chamber Exchange Views About Future Of Coal

(Editor’s note: Provided is a statement from the West Virginia Chamber that was issued to the West Virginia media on December 4, 2009. It is in response to an opinion piece by Senator Robert Byrd.)

West Virginia to Continue Fighting for Coal, Domestic Energy and West Virginia Jobs

Coal production and the energy it provides are vital to our local, state and national interests. The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce will redouble its support for domestic energy producers and the jobs they provide to tens of thousands of West Virginia families.

The West Virginia Chamber, made up of small businesses and mid-size firms that employ over half of West Virginia's workers, again calls on elected public servants in Washington to assist energy producing companies, jobs and the families they support throughout West Virginia.

Many state leaders including Governor Joe Manchin III, Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito, Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin and House Speaker Richard Thompson have challenged new federal regulations and legislation aimed at reducing domestic energy production. These leaders recognize that now is not the time for capitulation or lack of direction and fortitude. These times call for renewed strength, energy and commitment to the future of West Virginia.

The West Virginia Chamber will stand up for our state's working families by protecting and defending the very jobs that define our economy and provide a quality of life worth defending. It is our hope that elected officials, including Senator Byrd, will keep fighting hard every day for jobs, energy and our American way of life.

I thank Senator Byrd for defining his position on the future of coal. We agree that an honest dialogue on this complex issue is needed and continue to seek active engagement by our congressional delegation regarding coal permits, cap-and-trade and our state's economy.

Provided is the December 3 statement from Senator Byrd:

'Coal Must Embrace The Future'

U.S. Senator Robert Byrd

MetroNews, 12/03/2009

<http://www.wvmetronews.com/index.cfm?func=displayfullstory&storyid=33928>

Overview – War On Coal/Domestic Energy

Here is an [overview](#) prepared by the West Virginia Chamber regarding the federal actions that have begun since the start of the Obama Administration and the 111th U.S. Congress.