



8 March 2011

Dear North Dakota Public Service Commission,

I am writing to comment on the proposed South Heart Coal Mine. In my opinion this coal mine is a bad idea for North Dakota and I do not believe the Public Service Commission should allow this project. I would also like to request an informal hearing on this issue.

I am a North Dakota native who is very proud to call ND home. I appreciate the fact that we have such a high quality of life, that our state is not overcrowded and that it is not overrun with industry. Reading all the ads that the coal industry puts in our newspapers, I was led to believe that we have the cleanest air in the nation. Recently, I have been shocked to learn otherwise-- that the 24 million tons of coal burnt just upwind from Bismarck is in fact creating a very "toxic hot spot" in the heart of our state. According to the USA Today's 2008 report on toxic hot spots (based on the Toxic Release Inventory statistics), in the center of our state we have some of the worst air in the nation. My son has asthma and is now away at college, however, when he comes back to Bismarck his asthma is much worse. The coal here does make a difference. A very negative one.

As a mostly rural state, there is no reason to have so much pollution. Our air is not clean and our waters are all contaminated from mercury from coal emissions. And now while the world's energy leaders are all investing in clean energy, we are moving backwards, still relying on coal, instead of leading the world in resources we have an abundance of, like wind, biofuels and solar. We must start thinking about the consequences of coal-powered energy on the environment, our future and our children's health, because we pay the cost in the long run. The external costs of coal can no longer be ignored. We, as taxpayers, are tired of paying the external costs for the coal industry.

As a mother, day-care provider and elementary school volunteer I have devoted my life to helping the next generation. I truly believe we need the children to be more educated, safer and healthier; yet, more kids are developing asthma and allergies as their water, air and environment are becoming more toxic. Your decision will affect the well-being of those very kids I helped raise. I urge you to vote no on this coal mine permit.

For a state like North Dakota, which has an abundance of wind, it is ridiculous that we are still trying to burn the dirty, old and out-dated source: coal, which is polluting our air, water and land. We need to phase out coal, not build new mines and refineries. It is critical that our representatives listen to the needs and concerns of the people who live here, and start making changes to protect our health and our future in this state.

Sincerely,

Sandy Kienzle