

Comments to PADEP Citizens Advisory Council
By: Kimberly A. Jones
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Good afternoon. My name is Kimberly A. Jones and I reside at 415 W. Roy Furman Highway in Wind Ridge PA (in Greene County).

I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today. As stream 32596 is one of the streams discussed in this latest Act 54 Report, which was damaged by long wall mining and cannot be fixed, crosses my property.

I would first like to give you a little background on myself, for those of you that I have not met. I grew up in a small town in the Southwestern part of the state. It was like most small towns where you did one of two things: you either became a coal miner or a farmer. I was blessed because my grandparents owned a small farm within walking distance of my childhood home. My dad became a miner in 1969, and soon after he became a maintenance foreman for USS at the Maple Creek Mine in Bentleyville PA. I truly believe that the farm life is where I learned about life's lessons and how it takes working together to maintain the true quality of the farm and its animals. I never gave much thought to how coal mining might affect my way of life other than that it helped pay the bills.

I had the best of both worlds growing up. The old saying you can take the girl from the farm but you will never take the farm from the girl held so true for me. In 1994 my husband and I purchased our own small farm outside of Waynesburg PA and this was to be our American dream. But in January 2004, with one pass of the Bailey Mine 11 Panel, our dream started to change. We lost two domestic water wells, three springs, and a stream that flowed through our property. But as daughter of a coal miner never did I think that the laws and the company would fail us. I thought Act 54 was there to protect us and to save our water resources from harm and to hold the mine operators accountable for their actions. But I was wrong. It has now been 11 years since the stream on my property went dry. Although the mining company did some mitigation work sometime around 2008, which was four years after mining took place. The stream has not recovered to pre-mining conditions Stream 32596 which crosses my property is just one of at least 6 streams affected like this as discussed in the latest Act 54 Report.

With this latest Report, we can clearly see how long wall mining is detrimental to the hydrological balance of the Commonwealth and its landowners.

Industry and DEP would like us to believe they are doing everything possible to preserve our water resources from damage under Act 54. So far there are only a few cases where the stream was damaged and couldn't be fixed, but I am here as one of those land owners to let you know. I have met opposition not only from the mine company but from the DEP who is supposed to enforce the laws and regulation put in place to protect these resources. I have done my best to follow the Act 54 and DEP

procedures for replacing and restoring my water sources only to be told I did not file in a timely manner (to get compensation for my lost springs) and that industry has done everything "technologically and economically feasible" to restore the stream on my property. It's my understanding that now they will be allowed to walk away from my property and to do stream restoration work someplace else. That may make some regulatory sense to the DEP, but it doesn't help my family or my farm.

Many years ago it was believed that Act 54 would protect our water sources from the damage of long wall mining. But what Act 54 has really done is to allow the mining industry to dance around their responsibilities and obligations and put the burden back on the surface landowners and the Commonwealth.

We can no longer afford to kick this can down the road if we are serious about preserving our precious water resources for the generations to come.

As I said I truly believe that the farm life is where I learned about life's lessons and how it takes working together to maintain the true quality of the farm. Act 54 just doesn't do that; it falls short as we can see in this most recent Report. I'm not saying we need to stop mining altogether, but we must look into the true facts of mining and all of its effects and the footprint it is leaving behind. No longer can we just take industry word that everything is okay. If we are to maintain the true quality of the Commonwealth and its environment we must work together and find that common ground in the laws and regulations.

So with that being said I would hope the Citizen Advisory Council would truly help find that common ground between industry and the people of the Commonwealth and the water we so much need to protect. Because it will take each and every one of us working together to maintain the quality of life not only in Southwestern PA but the whole Commonwealth.

For without water we have nothing and our way of life will change forever.

Once again I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to come to you today.