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## **COAL COMPANY TO BEGIN DESTRUCTION OF MAJOR WEST VIRGINIA WIND ENERGY RESOURCE**

***Citizens ask WV Governor Manchin for “stay of execution” for Coal River Mountain; Mountaintop Removal (MTR) coal-mining would destroy potential source of renewable energy, green jobs; Online video at [http://www.coalriverwind.org/?page\\_id=117](http://www.coalriverwind.org/?page_id=117) shows what is at stake.***

**Charleston, W.Va.—September 9, 2008** – Richmond, Va.-based Massey Energy has announced plans to begin blasting Wednesday (September 10, 2008) on Coal River Mountain, destroying the site of a proposed wind farm. Community members are asking Governor Joe Manchin to halt the mountaintop removal operation and act on his commitment to renewable energy and to the citizens of West Virginia.

Extensive research shows that Coal River Mountain has enough wind potential to provide electricity for over 150,000 homes, forever. The wind farm would provide approximately 50 well-paying, permanent jobs in an area long dependent upon sparse, temporary coal mining jobs. This opportunity depends upon the mountain being left intact. However, Massey Energy has issued notice for blasting at the site to begin September 10. The 10-square-mile mountaintop removal coal mining site will eliminate both the wind energy resource and the resulting jobs as the mountain ridge will be lowered by over 500 feet.

“We’re asking Governor Manchin for a stay of execution for this mountain,” said Lorelei Scarbro, community organizer with Coal River Mountain Watch, and a resident of Rock Creek, WV. “Once the demolition begins, it will be very difficult to stop it, and once the mountain is removed, it won’t grow back. The potential for wind energy and good jobs will be gone forever, along with our renewable water and forest resources.”

A new online video at [http://www.coalriverwind.org/?page\\_id=117](http://www.coalriverwind.org/?page_id=117) shows what West Virginia stands to lose if the out-of-state coal company destroys this major wind energy resource, a potential source of continuous power production, local jobs and taxes for the county.

“Governor Manchin has stated that he will promote renewable energy projects to restore West Virginia’s credibility. He can preserve Coal River Mountain as the crown jewel of the Mountain State’s renewable energy future,” said Vernon Haltom, Coal River resident and Co-Director of Coal River Mountain Watch. “He can provide the courageous leadership that will move West Virginia and the nation toward clean energy and good jobs while preserving communities and citizens’ right to a healthy quality of life.”

“The mountaintop removal plans would only provide coal jobs for 14 years, while the wind farm jobs could last forever,” said Rory McIlmoil, wind project coordinator for Coal River Mountain Watch. “The wind farm would also create more mining jobs, since much of the coal can still be deep mined.” The Coal River Mountain Wind campaign’s online petition at [www.coalriverwind.org](http://www.coalriverwind.org) has generated over 8,000 signatures asking Gov. Manchin to rescind the permits his administration has granted.

“We met with the governor’s aide on August 21 and presented the preferable economic alternative, but now, with blasting set to begin in a couple of days, the situation is urgent” added Scarbro. “Gov. Manchin may feel he needs more time to decide, but he needs to stop this blasting so his office can look deeper into these questionable permits.”

Coal River Mountain Watch and a coalition of community and environmental groups will stand beside Coal River residents at a Rally for Green Jobs and Healthy Mountains, centered around Coal River Mountain, on September 16th from 5-6:30pm on the steps of the State Capitol in Charleston, WV. They

invite others to join them on that day to ask Governor Manchin to stand behind the Coal River Mountain Wind Farm.

“My family has been here for over 100 years. Now my grandkids are here. If they start blasting our mountain, our grandkids will have nothing to look forward to. A wind farm would preserve everything we live for,” said Emmett Withrow of Colcord. “We think Manchin can and should rescind the permits. We know he has the power.”

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