

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
114th Congress Disclosure Form
As required by and provided for in House Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)

May 20, 2015

*“State Perspectives on the Status of Cooperating Agencies for the Office of Surface Mining's
Stream Protection Rule”*

For Individuals:

Name:
Address:
Email Address:
Phone Number:

* * * * *

For Witnesses Representing Organizations:

Name: **Dustin White**

Name of Organization(s) You are Representing at the Hearing: **Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
(OVEC)**

Business Address: [REDACTED]

Business Email Address: [REDACTED]

Business Phone Number: [REDACTED]

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For Nongovernment Witnesses ONLY:

1. Please attach/include current curriculum vitae or resume.
2. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the subject matter of the hearing that were received in the current year and previous two calendar years by you or the organization(s) you represent at this hearing, including the source and amount of each grant or contract.
3. Please list any contracts or payments originating with a foreign government related to the subject matter of the hearing that were received in the current year and previous two calendar years by you or the organization(s) you represent at this hearing, including the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

Dustin C. White

Community Organizer

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Objective

To aid community members in the Appalachian region impacted by environmental injustice, especially around mountaintop removal, health, and water quality, and to provide them with the tools and information they may need to seek a solution to their issue.

Personal Profile

I am a native to the state of West Virginia and have been a lifelong resident. I was raised in Boone County, West Virginia, one of the state’s top coal producing counties and have lived in several different areas inside the county. I am approximately 11 generations West Virginian on my mother’s side of my family (Cook), one of the largest families documented in southern West Virginia, and approximately 5 generations on my father’s side (White). My mother is a former paramedic and now medical assistant at an income based rural health clinic in a community that has had heavy mining for decades. My father, now deceased, was a Vietnam Veteran and coal miner for Peabody Coal Corporation until the time of his retirement and a United Mine Workers of America member. Members of my family have worked in some form for the coal industry for decades and many were UMWA members, including my great-grandfather who was an original “Redneck” coal miner present at the largest labor insurrection in US history in 1921 in an attempt to unionize coal mines in southern West Virginia known as the Battle of Blair Mountain. I once considered myself an avid coal industry supporter. I became aware of issues related to mining, especially the practice known as “mountaintop removal” when Patriot Coal Company began the Cook Mountain Surface Mine. Cook Mountain was once home to

many of my ancestors, many of whom were laid to rest in a family cemetery on the mountain that Patriot Coal nearly destroyed during mining and wanted to deny us access to the cemetery. I am currently a resident of Charleston, West Virginia.

OVEC Work

- **Volunteer Work** (approximately 5 years)
 1. Successfully lobbied at the West Virginia State Legislature in 2010 as a citizen lobbyist for stronger cemetery protection and access legislation as it relates to mining.
 2. Helped table at events to disseminate information about the work OVEC does
 3. Gave presentations and acted as a citizen spokesperson at multiple events
 4. Assisted in tours of areas impacted by mining for other citizens, students, government officials, and press

- **Community Organizer for OVEC** (approximately 3 years)
 1. Worked to aid residents in a community in Wyoming County, WV, who did outreach to OVEC when they noticed a change in water quality when a surface mine owned by Bluestone Coal Company began operation near the community. Spent 8 hours twice a week for 6 months collecting information from community members and aided in having water testing done for the community by an independent lab that tested positive for known contaminants from mining in their personal wells. Held a community meeting where residents decided they would pursue legal action and they were put in contact with a law firm. The case is still currently under litigation, but the court ruled that the coal company must provide the community with indefinite emergency relief water for them to use.
 2. Worked with residents of eastern Kanawha County, WV, as related to the Keystone Development #2 mine adjacent to the Kanawha State Forest. On going.
 3. Represented OVEC at “informal conferences” on proposed mining permits held by the WV Department of Environmental Protection. Given

testimony at informal conferences and at state legislative hearings on water quality.

4. Participated in “Citizens Inspections” of mine sites for potential violations as outlined under the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act
5. Legal work.
 - a) Acted as a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit against Alpha Natural Resources for damage done to a family cemetery due to mining on the Twilight Surface Mine.
 - b) Served as standing for lawsuits related streams that I am intimately familiar with that have tested positive for high levels of selenium and conductivity near mining operations.
6. Worked with citizens in Fayette County, WV, around the Frasier Creek surface mine. Assisted with a series of meetings titled “The Coalfield Environmental Health Project” in the communities near the mine.
7. Served as an organizer on the C.A.R.E (Citizen Action for Real Enforcement) Campaign in West Virginia. The C.A.R.E Campaign revolved around highlighting the failure of the WV Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Mining and Reclamation to adequately enforce regulations related to mining. As part of the campaign, a diverse group of organizations inside the state along with citizens filed the 733 primacy petition under SMCRA (Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act) to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement that highlighted 19 failures of the DEP’s mining division. OSMRE is currently investigating 5 of the 19 claims.
8. Worked with citizens in the community of Hughes Creek, WV, on an Abandoned Mine Lands issue where an old deep mine filling with water was creating a potentially hazardous situation for the community
9. Helped provide emergency aid in the form of delivering supplies and bottled water to communities that were impacted by the 2014 Methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM) chemical disaster that left approximately 300,000 people in West Virginia without useable municipal water for weeks.
10. Constant observation and conductivity testing in streams near mountaintop removal mines.
11. Outreach and connect with other national communities working on campaigns against mountaintop removal such as divestment and engaging other communities impacted by extractive industries.

The Alliance for Appalachia: OVEC is a member group of The Alliance for Appalachia, a regional collaboration of allies fighting mountaintop removal dealing with federal policy

- **The Alliance for Appalachia Federal Team Work**

1. Lobbied over a 7 year period for the Appalachian Restoration Act, the Clean Water Protection Act, and the Appalachian Community Health Emergency (ACHE) Act in U.S. Congressional offices. Lobbied against and educated the public on bad bills related to water quality and mining and have been present in the audience for congressional hearings.
2. Attended meetings with federal agencies such as the Department of the Interior and OSMRE, the EPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality for stricter regulatory rules related to mountaintop removal mining.
3. Work with regional allies to develop a federal strategy against mountaintop removal mining.

- **Alliance Steering Committee**

1. Serve as the OVEC staff liaison to The Alliance for Appalachia to keep allies updated on work OVEC is doing inside WV.
2. Work with regional allies on collaboration projects and citizen trainings.
3. Work on national education about mountaintop removal.