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Ending mountaintop coal removal

Rich Heffern | Oct. 14, 2009 NCR Today

The Sierra Club this week released a groundbreaking new report that reaffirms the economic benefits of ending mountaintop removal coal mining and transitioning to clean energy sources in Appalachia.

The report shows that America can have affordable electricity without mountaintop removal because many factors contribute to the cost of electricity, with coal prices playing just one small part.

According to the report:

Ending mountaintop removal would have a negligible effect on electricity prices in the eastern United States, where mountaintop removal coal is currently burned.
We have an abundance of cost-effective alternatives to mountaintop removal coal.
Other types of mining in Appalachia employ more workers.
Mountaintop removal coal mining costs state budgets more than it generates.
Mountaintop removal destroys clean energy sources.

The report comes as the Army Corps of Engineers holds public hearings across Appalachia this week where hundreds of residents are calling for an end to a "one-size-fits-all" nationwide permit that has been used for years to allow this destructive type of coal mining. At the hearings, the coal industry will likely argue that radical strip mining benefits Appalachia's economy, but this new report reaffirms the value of clean energy.

To read the full report, its executive summary, or a white paper on other recent mountaintop removal coal mining studies, head over to the Sierra Club's factsheet page, http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/factsheets.aspx [1]

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[1] http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/factsheets.aspx