



EARTHWORKS

Earth Notes

Issue 3.2 > January 24th, 2011

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EPA lives up to its name: Why responsible oversight is worth fighting for

Dear [[First_Name]],

This edition of EARTHnotes demonstrates the importance of responsible government oversight of mining, digging and drilling companies. It highlights how legally-binding rules protect communities and the environment right now, and their potential to do so in the future.

In Walmart, we also touch on the shortcomings of corporate claims of "sustainability". Without independent third-party oversight -- ala FSC-certified wood -- such claims should be viewed with skepticism.

We close on a cautionary note: there are those in Congress who are proudly opposed to government in the public interest -- and who are working to remove this oversight.

But this is a positive update: it shows that working together, we can influence government to defend impacted communities, their health and the environment upon which we all rely.

Alan Septoff, EARTHWORKS

EPA mountaintop removal decision sets great precedent for Alaska's Bristol Bay

Last week the EPA stepped into a leadership position by revoking the water permit for the Spruce No. 1 Mine in West Virginia, recognizing that mountaintop removal coal mining causes irreparable damage to America's waterways.

The EPA's move to protect Appalachian streams sends a hopeful signal far northward to the struggle to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska from the proposed largest strip mine in North America, the Pebble Mine. The EPA could exercise the same authority to protect water by denying the permit for the Pebble Mine to dump toxic mine waste into the headwaters of the world's largest remaining wild salmon fishery.

[Read [EARTHWORKS' Executive Director Jennifer Krill's full post at EARTHblog.](#)]

Justice Department ends Range Resources' fantasy in wonderland

Two weeks ago, [we told you about Range Resources' willful blindness to EPA's charge \(and emergency Safe Drinking Water Act order to stop\) that it had polluted a Texas aquifer.](#)

Basically, EPA told Range Resources: "You're polluting. Stop it." And Range responded with a letter to EPA, "Thanks for agreeing we're not polluting."

Last week, Range Resources was brought back to reality: the Justice Department sued them in federal court to enforce EPA's emergency order.

[Learn more from [Sharon Wilson, EARTHWORKS' Texas Oil & Gas Accountability Project organizer, on her blog: Bluedaze.](#)]

Take Action: Tell Wal-Mart what true "love" is.

In the last edition of EARTHnotes [we drew your attention to the greenwash that is Walmart's "Love, Earth" line of jewelry.](#) Walmart launched it with great fanfare in 2008 as "sustainable" jewelry that meets "Walmart's environmental and social criteria."

But a recent report demonstrated that -- even if you think Walmart's environmental and social criteria are sustainable (we don't) -- Walmart doesn't even meet its own criteria. In short, "Love, Earth" is greenwash.

In response, we are calling on people to [join us](#) in [sending letters to Walmart](#) to ask that they suspend their "Love, Earth" jewelry brand until they actually make it sustainable.

[TAKE ACTION: Tell Walmart you're not fooled by "Love, Earth". Tell them to stop the greenwash](#)

[Find out more about [what led us to call on Walmart to drop "Love, Earth".](#) And take action to [tell Walmart to stop the greenwash.](#)]

EPA works within existing rules to protect groundwater from diesel

Last week the New York Times erroneously reported that the EPA issued new rules governing the injection of diesel fuel in hydraulic fracturing (aka fracking). They didn't.

What EPA did do: use its website to highlight existing law that authorizes EPA to prevent the injection of diesel fuel underground during fracking. EPA took this step only after companies like Halliburton were caught doing so.

[Learn more about [why EPA was forced to act \(within existing rules\) from EARTHWORKS' Policy Director Lauren Pagel at EARTHblog.](#)]

House Democrats support fracking toxics disclosure on public lands

On January 13th, 46 Democrats from the House of Representatives sent a letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar that supports his move towards public disclosure of fracturing chemicals for oil and gas operations on public lands.

As a first step in regulating oil and gas production on our public lands -- lands that are owned by you and me -- disclosure is a no-brainer.

[Learn more about [the House disclosure letter and why it's important from EARTHWORKS' Policy Director Lauren Pagel over at EARTHblog.](#)]

Government oversight at risk: regulatory hit list to be published

Our friends at OMB Watch tipped us to the fact that Darrell Issa, the new chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform committee has consulted with 150 companies, trade groups and think tanks -- requesting lists of regulations that they would like rolled back.

To Issa's credit: he will make public the requests he receives.

[Read more about [this threat to the public interest, including the original story, at EARTHblog.](#)]

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Cell phones contain toxic metals that can pollute the environment and threaten human health.

When recycled responsibly these metals can be put into circulation, decreasing the need for new metal mining.