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environmental justice

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Sierra Club Environmental Justice Projects: Arizona

May 10, 2002

Forest Lake, Navajo Nation

The Navajo Residents of Black Mesa will gather to publicly OPPOSE Peabody Coal Company's application to the Dept. of Interior' Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to issue a permanent permit for the Black Mesa Mine under the Indian Lands Program. Various organization and the Hopi people who object to Peabody coal mining operation will join the Navajos in the peaceful demonstration.

The Forest Lake chapter of the NN passed a Chapter Resolution opposing the request to increase water withdrawal from the Navajo (N) Aquifer from the 4,000 acre feet to 5,700 acre feet to transport coal by slurry pipeline, and oppose coal production from 4.7 million tons per year to 5.7 million tons per year.

The OSM and BIA should not issue a permanent program permit or "life of the mine" permit due to the fact that Peabody has failed to abide and live up to it's original agreement that is to with the development of community infrastructures, local elementary school, health clinic, and more, said Amos Johnson, President of the Forest Lake Chapter.

Approximately 90 percent of the Navajo People of Forest Lake do not have indoor plumbing who hauls water to domestic use while Peabody has pumped hundreds of millions of gallons of pristine ground water to slurry coal 273 miles to Laughling, NV. Mr. Johnson, states that the people of Forest Lake feel that Peabody should transfer one of their wells and assist the community by developing a public water system.

In the long term the chapter feels that the cultural, human health, environment, and the social impact out the local economic benefits. Mrs. Johnson, states, for every dollar generated from the coal water revenues less than one cent or practically none is reinvested to improve the living conditions for the Navajo people living on Black Mesa.

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