

# STAND UP TO COAL

## CONCERNS ABOUT COAL IN OUR COMMUNITY

Sunrise Coal, LLC would like to establish an underground mine in SW Vermilion County, Illinois.

Here are some concerns about what this mine would bring to our communities:

### Air Quality

Coal dust that would blow off the coal piles South-East of Homer at the processing facility and off the trucks and rail cars during transit would be a serious public health concern. Such dust is known to cause respiratory problems, such as asthma and COPD, and is known to contain heavy metals including mercury, arsenic, selenium, and chromium. Farm-field and limestone quarry dust do not contain such toxic chemicals, and the coal piles would be a far more concentrated source of dust. **Do we want to breathe this kind of air?**

### Water

- ⤴ *Large withdrawals of local ground water* for coal mining would impact local drinking water supplies, threatening local wells and safe drinking water for people and livestock.
- ⤴ *Removing large quantities of water from local streams* could impact available drinking water supplies for downstream communities, threaten wildlife, and impair recreation.
- ⤴ *Storage and release of water* containing heavy metals and chemicals used during the washing process could threaten drinking water supplies by seeping into ground water wells and breaching retaining walls at storage pits.
- ⤴ *Lax enforcement of state and federal regulations* of mining activities and water quality is inadequate to protect us.

**Do we want to live with these kinds of risks in our communities?**

### Land

Prime farmland would be taken out of production forever, and the coal mining process will likely block tile drains and eventually cause subsidence (sinking of the land) lowering productivity of the rich soil in this region. During and after mining, growth is limited by the risk of placing new construction over mined land. Coal slurry pits up to one square mile and 100 feet deep containing arsenic and other heavy metals have the potential to contaminate the land when the contents seeps or breaches the containment field. When mining operations are concluded we could be left with:

- ⤴ subsidence
- ⤴ poor drainage
- ⤴ toxic slurry pits
- ⤴ storage sites for other industrial wastes (e.g Murdock mine in Newman, IL).

**Do we want to imperil our rich agricultural heritage, the cornerstone of our community?**

## Jobs

The assertion by Sunrise Coal that 300 jobs will be brought to our community does not mean that 300 local people will be hired. What kind of labor will be demanded for these jobs requiring 'no prior experience in mining?' Will the wages and benefits offset the lifelong health issues of the worker and the degradation of the community once the mine has moved away? **Employment in farming is long-term and stable because it is based on our productive soils. Employment in mining is once and lasts for only a few years.**

## Community/Quality of Life

Introduction of a coal mine changes the fundamental character of our community. Typically, when a coal mine comes to a community, over time, residents move away and property values decrease. Nobody wants to move to a coal town. Any community development will be lost if the community eventually dies when people move away from the dirt, pollution, and contamination brought in by the mine. Dirty air and water also have the potential to impact outdoor activities in the area, from fishing to boating to walking down the street. **Do we want to live in a coal town? Are there other, better industries or businesses we could be bringing to this area that would grow strong, healthy, vibrant communities?**

## Become Involved and Stay Informed

Announcements for upcoming meetings and actions can be found at these websites:

[standuptocoal.org](http://standuptocoal.org)

[prairieriversnetwork.org](http://prairieriversnetwork.org)

[saltforkfriends.blogspot.com](http://saltforkfriends.blogspot.com)