

**Earthjustice \* Friends of the Earth \* Greenpeace \* Sierra Club**

May 7, 2009

E. Gordon Gee  
President, The Ohio State University  
205 Bricker Hall  
190 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210-1357  
VIA FACSIMILE 614-292-1231

Dear President Gee:

Our organizations write to ask you to resign your position on the Board of Directors of Massey Energy. Your association with Massey Energy undermines your own standing as an advocate for clean energy sources and confers undeserved credibility on Massey's terrible environmental record.

We applaud your recognition of the need for action on energy and climate change. You have repeatedly spoken out about the environmental and economic benefits of developing clean energy sources. You signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, acknowledging the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And through the President's Council on Sustainability, you initiated action to reduce energy use at the university. We welcome your advocacy on clean energy and climate change.

Yet the values of environmental sustainability and renewable energy use that you have espoused as President of The Ohio State University are completely at odds with the environmental devastation Massey Energy has caused. As the single biggest practitioner of mountaintop removal mining, Massey is responsible for a large measure of the devastation this mining technique has wreaked in Appalachia. Mountaintop removal has buried close to 2,000 miles of streams and flattened some 500 mountains. It could destroy nearly 1.5 million acres of forest and impact 244 terrestrial species, according to an Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the federal government. This destruction is irreparable.

Massey's record of compliance with environmental laws is abysmal. During your tenure on Massey's board, the company committed Clean Water Act violations that led to a record \$20 million civil penalty – the largest that the EPA has ever levied against a company for wastewater violations. According to the government's complaint, the company violated its Clean Water Act permits more than 4,500 times between January 2000 and December 2006.

Much as Appalachian communities desperately need good-paying jobs, mountaintop removal mining is not a solution to Appalachia's economic problems because it relies largely on huge equipment and requires relatively few workers.

The median household income in coal-producing counties in eastern Kentucky is similar to that of counties in eastern Kentucky which do not produce coal. And median household income is significantly lower in eastern Kentucky as a whole than in the rest of the state.

The need for flat land in Appalachia to support economic development is sometimes offered as a rationale by mountaintop removal mining advocates. The reality is that very little post-mining land in Appalachia is put to productive economic use. It is located in isolated mountain areas. The soils are unstable and not suitable for building, and there is no surface or groundwater supply available to support development.

As one of the nation's most experienced and respected university presidents, your participation on Massey's board provides the company with undeserved credibility. At the same time, it undermines your own effectiveness as an advocate for clean energy sources. We urge you to resolve this conflict by leaving Massey Energy's board.

Sincerely,



Carl Pope  
Executive Director  
Sierra Club



Trip Van Noppen  
President  
Earthjustice



Brent Blackwelder  
President  
Friends of the Earth



Phil Radford  
Executive Director  
Greenpeace USA