

I want the RECORD to note there is no reason to oppose this bill and particularly to oppose this continuing resolution on the basis of the deletion of the loan guarantee program from the Satellite Home Bureau Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

#### MOUNTAINTOP MINING

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, in the rush to complete work on an omnibus appropriations bill that will attract enough votes to pass both Chambers of Congress without incurring a veto from the White House, a number of important measures that should have been in the conference report have ended up on the cutting room floor. One of those issues is mountaintop mining.

I am extremely disappointed at the shortsightedness of the White House, as well as some Members of Congress, on this issue. We had a chance on the omnibus package to right a wrong, to remedy the crisis in West Virginia's coal fields that was triggered by a recent Federal court ruling. But the White House blocked that effort, leading the charge to exclude the proposed legislative remedy from the omnibus bill. As a result, thousands of coal miners in West Virginia, and throughout Appalachia, are facing a bleak and uncertain future.

Particularly troubling to me is that the ammunition used to defeat this proposal, the ammunition used to keep it out of the omnibus package, was, in large part, a campaign of misinformation, led by the White House.

My proposal is not anti-environment. The White House would have you believe otherwise. My proposal would not weaken or in any way alter the Clean Water Act. Let the White House hear! The White House would have the people believe otherwise. Let me say it again. This amendment which is cosponsored by Mr. MCCONNELL, the senior Senator from Kentucky; Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the junior Senator from West Virginia; and Mr. BUNNING, the junior Senator from Kentucky, would not weaken or in any way alter, modify, change, repeal, amend, or undermine the Clean Water Act.

I know the White House has tried to mislead people into believing that it would. It would not. Fie on the White House! fie for attempting to mislead the people. Now, one can honestly believe what he is saying and can mislead or one can mislead with the intention of misleading.

All the Byrd-McConnell amendment would do is preserve the status quo until an environmental impact assessment, which is already underway, is completed and regulations resulting from it are issued. That environmental impact assessment was not put in motion by the White House; it was put in motion by a court action last December.

No laws would be weakened by the Byrd-McConnell amendment. No regu-

lations would be discarded. The legislative remedy that is proposed by this amendment is not an either/or proposition. This amendment would permit carefully controlled mountaintop mining while allowing work to continue on a broad environmental study that could spur better oversight and more environmentally friendly mining practices nationally in the years ahead. In my book, that is a win/win situation.

This mountaintop mining proposal is an effort to stand up for America's coal miners—and the railway workers, and the truckers, and the suppliers, and all who are involved directly or indirectly with mining. This proposal is an effort to stand up for the coal miners and the hundreds of thousands of jobs and the scores of other industries they support. Allowing this opportunity to slip through our fingers would be a grievous mistake.

We can't control what the people at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue say. We can't control how they treat America's coal miners. But we can speak up for what we believe here in the Senate. We can send our message to the White House.

To get that message across, I hope to offer an amendment. I could speak at length on the omnibus appropriations bill when it comes before the Senate. We could be here another week. We could be here another 2 weeks.

They say time is running out for the continuing resolution. Madam President, time is running out for the coal miners and their families, and for the retired coal miners, and their wives, or their widows, and their families. Time is running out for them. The President wants this Appropriations Bill sent to him, in Greece. Indeed! What are we going to send to the coal miners who have been working for this country before he was born? What are we going to send them?

I have seriously considered this matter. This issue merits the time and the attention of Congress. I am prepared to give it some time.

I don't want to hold this measure up interminably. I want to see action on it. I want to vote. I want to vote on this amendment—the Byrd, McConnell, Rockefeller, Bunning, et al. amendment.

So, I take these few moments to speak the truth, to try to set the record straight on the impact of this amendment, of which I am the chief cosponsor, and to give this body, and hopefully the other body, one more chance this year to protect the jobs and the livelihoods of thousands of working men and women in West Virginia and throughout America, and to give the White House one more chance to reverse its current position and protect the jobs of the coal miners.

We are not just talking about coal miners; we are also talking about the coal industry; we are talking about other laborers—the truckers, the railway operators, the barge operators who go up and down the Ohio and other riv-

ers. It isn't just the coal miners union that is concerned. The AFL-CIO is concerned. Take another look! Take another look at those who are opposed and who work against legislation that will benefit the working men and women of America.

On October 20, a Federal district court in West Virginia issued an opinion in a lawsuit involving Federal regulatory agencies that virtually set off an explosion in the coal fields. Mining companies immediately announced that there would be hundreds of coal miners who would be cut off, and new mines which were in the plans by companies to be built, would be scuttled.

In some instances, a new mine costs \$50 million; it costs \$75 million in some instances; and in some instances it costs \$90 million, or more, to open a new mine. What mining company is going to invest \$90 million in a new mine when the Federal judge issues a ruling such as this? There is no predictability at all in the future.

Before the court issued its opinion, as part of a settlement the mining industry in West Virginia was operating under two memoranda of understanding—two memoranda of understanding that had been agreed upon. Hear this: Two memoranda of understanding. I didn't have anything to do with those memoranda of understanding. Who agreed? Who entered into agreements concerning mountaintop mining? Who entered into agreements concerning mountaintop mining? Who entered into the memoranda of understanding? These were agreed upon by the Federal and State regulatory agencies. Hear me now! These were entered into and agreed upon by the regulatory agencies—both State and Federal—that oversee mining permits.

What are those agencies that entered into this agreement? The Federal Office of Surface Mining, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the State Division of Environmental Protection, the Environmental Protection Agency. These are this administration's regulatory agencies. This administration's regulatory agencies entered into those agreements.

Let me say that again. Hear me.

Who entered into those regulations? Who were the parties to those agreements? This administration's regulatory agencies, the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior through the Office of Surface Mining, and the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection—Federal and State agencies—created these agreements, devised these memoranda of understanding. They weren't created by me. The administration's own Environmental Protection Agency, the great Federal protector of our land, water, and air, helped to write and signed onto these memoranda of understanding.

Do you, my friends, really believe that the EPA signed agreements that weakened environmental protections?

Let me say to the White House: Do you believe that your own Environmental Protection Agency signed onto agreements that weakened environmental protections? No. No. These memoranda of understanding—called MOUs—put into place stronger environmental protections in West Virginia.

Listen to this: These MOUs put into place stronger—get it, now—stronger environmental protections and regulations in West Virginia than exist in any other State in the Union. Hear me, environmentalists; you ought to be fighting for this amendment. You ought to be urging us on in our fight for this amendment. I am an environmentalist. Who was the majority leader of the Senate when SMCRA was passed in this body, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act? Who was the majority leader of the Senate then? Who stood up for you environmentalists then?

West Virginia at one time was the only State in the United States that had no wildlife refuge. I put money in Appropriations bills, to bring the first wildlife refuge to West Virginia, the last State among the 50 that got a wildlife refuge. Hear me, environmentalists. Who put the money in for the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge—that West Virginia refuge was the 500th in the nation? I did.

I am an environmentalist. Who put the \$138 million in for the fish and wildlife's national conservation and training facilities at Terrapin Neck, three miles out of Shepherdstown, WV? Who fought 5 years in the Senate Appropriations Committee for that \$138 million? Who fought for it in the House-Senate conferences? This Senator; this environmentalist fought for it.

Nobody wants a cleaner environment than I do. But I hope I also have some common sense. We know that in West Virginia the great core industries have fueled the powerplants of the Nation, have fueled the war machine of the Nation. The coal industry, the steel industry, the glass industry, the chemical industry, these and other core industries have employed hundreds of people in West Virginia. The core industries are still there, but they are diminishing. There were 125,000 coal miners in West Virginia when I first ran for the House of Representatives in 1952. Today, there are only 20,000, give or take, in West Virginia.

These core industries cannot always be what they once were. But there are those who want coal mining stopped now. They want it stopped tonight. They want it stopped tomorrow. Shut it down! That is what they want. But we can't do that. It can't be done overnight. People have to work. Children have to eat. Widows have to live. We have to continue to operate the mines. We are trying to develop other industries in West Virginia—high-tech industries. I have tried to encourage Federal agencies to look to West Virginia

for a better quality of life, for a safer life, where the people who work can at last buy a home, where people want to work and will turn in a good day's work.

We are trying to diversify our industries. It takes time. I have put appropriations into the corridor highways of West Virginia, so that other industries will be encouraged to come into West Virginia and to expand. They won't come where there are bad roads. They need an infrastructure that will support their industries and their people. It takes time. It can't be done overnight. Those environmentalists who want it done overnight, it can't be done overnight.

Those MOUs established stronger environmental protections and regulations in West Virginia than exist in any other State in the Nation, bar none. I say to the Administration, your own regulatory agencies agreed and worked out those regulations, and now you, the White House, want to turn your back on your own environmental agency, on your own Army Corps of Engineers, on your own Office of Surface Mining.

Peter heard the cock crow three times, and then he hung his head in shame. He denied his Lord thrice and then hung his own head in shame and walked away.

White House, hang your head in shame!

But the court's opinion, throw all these things out the window. The MOUs, the agreements that have been entered into by this administration's regulatory agencies, are all thrown out the window. The court ruled that the way in which the agencies were operating did not follow the letter and intent of the law.

Hear that. I helped to create those laws. I supported the Clean Water Act. I supported the Surface Mining and Control Reclamation Act. I supported it. But the court ruled that the way in which these agencies were operating did not follow the letter of the law and intent of the law.

Congress passed the law. The court disagreed with the way in which the Federal regulatory agencies and the State regulatory agency interpreted the law. But the court was wrong. There are 20,000 miners, 20,000 voices that come from the coal fields who say that the court was wrong. Its decision was completely contrary to the intent of Congress in passing those two laws, the Clean Water Act and the Surface Mining and Control and Reclamation Act.

While I disagree with the court, the ball is here. It is in our court now because the judge in his ruling said if application of Federal regulation prevents certain activities in the Appalachian coal fields "it is up to Congress." That is this body and the other body. He said . . . "it is up to Congress"—and the legislature—"to alter that result."

So we have accepted the responsibility. The judge said it is up to Con-

gress. We, who are supporting this amendment, have accepted that responsibility and we are trying to do something about it. We are being impeded and we are being undercut by the White House, by my own White House.

Almost immediately after the judge issued his ruling, confusion reigned. There was chaos in the coal fields. Lay-off notices went out. Mining companies announced that they might not make significant investments in the State that had long ago been planned. That is real money that has to be spent. Those are real risks they take on. As a result of the court ruling, coal companies, truckers, barge operators, railroads—none of them had any certainty that the investments they might make today would be justifiable tomorrow.

Some say, it's just a West Virginia problem. You tell the people of Kentucky that. Tell the people of Pennsylvania that. Too bad for West Virginia. But I am here to say to my colleagues it is a national problem. Look out. Look out. That cloud that is over West Virginia is headed your way next, Kentucky. And MITCH MCCONNELL knows that. That is why he is a cosponsor of this amendment. That cloud just over the border, that cloud is just over the horizon in West Virginia. You will be next. And they know it. Look out, it is coming your way next. But if you want to head it off, the opportunity is here with this amendment. This is the time to head off this dragon. Beat it back. Take the sword that I offer, that MITCH MCCONNELL offers, that JAY ROCKEFELLER offers, that Senator BUNNING offers, and all the other Senators whose names are on this amendment offer—take this sword. Take this sword, and fight for the working men and women of this Nation, and do it now.

Some may say, "I would like to. I would like to sign up. I am willing to put on the suit of armor—but what about the environment? We can't upset the environment."

Let me assure my colleagues and the people who are watching out there—let me assure you, this amendment is not the toxic monster it is purported to be by some of the environmental organizations and by this White House. It is not the toxic monster they purport it to be. In fact, this amendment puts into place in West Virginia—get this—this amendment puts into place in West Virginia the tougher environmental standards prescribed by the very MOUs that this administration's own EPA helped to negotiate. But you certainly would not know that from all of the frothing at the mouth by people who either have no idea what they are talking about, or who, for some reason, are deliberately trying to mislead the people of this country. They either have no idea of what they are talking about or they are deliberately and dishonestly trying to mislead.

Those who have expressed opposition to this amendment, including the White House, claim it would harm

clean water protections under both the Clean Water Act and SMCRA. There is not a word—not a word—of that true, and they ought to know it, the people who are saying it. As a matter of fact, as far as I am concerned, they do know it. But they certainly ought to if they don't.

This amendment would not harm the Clean Water and the Surface Mining Reclamation Acts, would not harm those protections. This amendment would not lay a hand on those protections. It would not touch—not touch them. It would not even brush up against them. This amendment specifically states—now hear this, hear this Senators—this amendment specifically states:

Nothing in this section modifies, supercedes, undermines, displaces or amends any requirement of or regulation issued under the Federal Water Pollution Act commonly known as the Clean Water Act, or the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

What could be plainer? What could be clearer? What could give greater assurance than these words that are in the amendment?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Will the Senator from West Virginia yield for a question?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, I yield to my friend, Senator MCCONNELL. Yes, I do.

Mr. MCCONNELL. So the Senator from West Virginia is referring to the sentence in a letter from John Podesta, the Chief of Staff of the President, which says:

As you know, this is consistent with the President's opposition to appropriation riders that would weaken or undermine environmental protections under current law.

I say to my friend from West Virginia—I ask him, that is simply incorrect, isn't it?

Mr. BYRD. Absolutely.

Mr. MCCONNELL. They are not telling the truth, are they?

Mr. BYRD. They are not telling the truth.

Mr. MCCONNELL. They either know it, in which case they are not telling the truth, or they are woefully uninformed, aren't they?

Mr. BYRD. They either know they are not telling the truth or they are woefully uninformed; exactly, preeminently precise.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The President came to Hazard, KY, this year, and he bit his lip, and he felt our pain. And he said: What can we do for you? I am here in Appalachia to find out what I can do for you, to make life better.

This is it, isn't it? I say to my friend from Virginia. This is what they can do for us to make life better?

Mr. BYRD. That is it, that is it, and it has my fingerprints on it, and it has your fingerprints on it, may I say to my dear friend from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. And we have 20,000, 15,000 coal miners jobs in Kentucky, and 65,000 additional jobs that would not be there but for coal. And the only impression we can get from this is, they don't care.

Mr. BYRD. Exactly.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend.

Mr. BYRD. What other impression could one get?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Because we have made it clear to them, haven't we, what this is all about? It does not change current law at all?

Mr. BYRD. It does not change current law at all. It doesn't touch current law.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend from West Virginia.

(Mr. ROBERTS assumed the chair.)

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the White House has pressed for changes in this amendment. The White House, according to Mr. Podesta's letter to the Speaker and Mr. Podesta's letter to me, wants a "time limited solution." This amendment is limited to 2 years or to the completion of the ongoing Federal study which was ordered by a court in December of last year and the issuance of any regulations resulting from that study.

The White House argues that because the district court has stayed its ruling, the jobs of thousands of miners in West Virginia and hundreds of thousands of workers in mining and related jobs on the east coast are no longer threatened. The White House is wrong.

The court, when it ordered the stay, said this stay has no legal basis. In other words, he said: The only reason I am issuing this stay is to pour a little oil on troubled waters, let the waters calm down a little bit. All this chaos and confusion flows from my decision; I am going to put a stay on that. You can have a little time to get your breath.

But he said there is no legal basis for it, which means that the court could lift the stay. When Congress gets out of town, who knows, the court may lift that stay. The court itself, as I say, noted that there is no legal basis for the stay, but, in fact, that the stay was issued in response to the uproar created by the court's ruling. That is why we have a stay.

The administration, whose representatives had been working with me on the language of this amendment, said to me there is no need now for any legislation. Do not believe it.

The White House argues that because the district court has stayed its ruling, the jobs of thousands of miners in West Virginia and hundreds of thousands of workers in mining and related jobs on the east coast are no longer threatened. The court could lift its stay. Let me say again, the court itself noted that there was no legal basis for the stay.

We have no assurances as to how long that stay will remain in place. It provides no comfort for coal miners. It provides no comfort for mining companies who want to invest in new mines to employ more miners than their sons. It provides no comfort to others whose jobs rely on coal, such as the trucking industry, the barge industry, the railroad industry, the suppliers. To them,

the stay is a stay. It is more like a weekend pass. That stay has placed a cloud of uncertainty, a cloud that hangs over the mining industry in West Virginia, a cloud that is sprouting long, gray tentacles that will stretch across the skies of other States.

I ask my colleagues and those who are watching—and I hope the White House is watching—just how many companies do you think are going to sign up to any real commitment of financial resources and invest the millions of dollars that it takes to operate? How many of them are going to sign up with this stay hanging over their heads? Why would they want to?

The permitting process was going along swimmingly before the judge's decision. It was going along under the regulations that were agreed to and created by the White House's own regulatory agencies: the EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Interior Department through the Office of Surface Mining. Fifty-nine of 62 pending permits could not be approved under that stay. There are 62 pending permits; 59 of these could not be approved under that stay, according to the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection as of Monday of this week.

If this amendment is not adopted, there are those who will point to this day and call it a victory for environmental protection, but those individuals have not lifted a finger—they have not lifted a finger, have not lifted the smallest finger—to help the many residents of Appalachia who do not have safe water piped into their modest homes for their little children to drink. They do not carry banners. They do not carry banners and placards and write letters and lobby Congress about the fact that those same streams they applaud themselves for protecting from rock and dirt are being polluted by the wastewater of communities that are too poor to build sewage plants.

These head-in-the-clouds individuals peddle dreams of an idyllic life among old growth trees, but they seem to be ignorant of the fact that without the mines, jobs will disappear, the tables will go bare, the cupboards will be empty, schools will not have the revenue to teach the children, and towns will not have the income to provide even basics. But what do they care? They will have already thrown down their placards and their banners and gone off somewhere else.

These dreamers—I know, I have been down there. They have been carrying their banners around some of the meetings that I have addressed. They might as well talk to the trees. I am speaking for the coal miners. I lived in a coal miner's home. I grew up in a coal miner's home. I ate from a coal miner's table. I slept on a coal miner's bed. I lived under a coal miner's roof.

Loretta Lynn sings the song "I'm a Coal Miner's Daughter." I married a coal miner's daughter more than 62 years ago. My wife's brother died of

pneumoconiosis. He died of black lung, contracted in the coal mines. And his father died under a slate fall—under a slate fall. He died in the darkness. He died in the darkness.

Many times I have gone to the miners' bath house and pulled back the canvas cover and peered into the face of a coal miner whom I knew and who had been killed under a slate fall or killed by being run over by an electric motor.

Many times I have walked those steep hillsides and helped to carry the heavy—and I mean heavy—coffins of miners who died following the edict of the Creator, when he drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, saying: In the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat bread. And those coal miners know what that means.

But this court ruling will take away the right of thousands of coal miners and truckers and railroad workers and barge operators to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow.

Hear me, coal miners! If you do not know now who your friends are, you soon will know. These dreamers would have us believe that if only our mountains—if only our mountains—remain pristine, new jobs will come. "Or," they suggest, "perhaps coalfields residents should simply commute to other areas for employment." To these individuals I say, "Get real!"

Those of you in the White House, who have been working behind my back on this amendment, go down there and talk to those coal miners. Tell them what you have done.

You do not have to drive the dangerous, winding, narrow roads over which these workers would have to commute each morning and evening.

When the picket signs are gone, when the editorials in the big city papers are lining bird cages, the people of the small mining communities will be left. You will be gone. You have thrown down your banners. You have thrown down your placards. You have thrown down your candles. But those people of the small mining communities will still be there. They will be left to repair the economic damage.

Mining will be part of the economic base of my State for the foreseeable future, and new ways must be explored to make mining practices more environmentally friendly. And I am for that. At the same time, we have to recognize that the amount of coal reserves in West Virginia is finite. We must continue to broaden our State's economic base. But such change cannot happen overnight.

A new economic base cannot spring from the ocean foam. It cannot emanate from the brain of Jove, like Minerva, fully clothed and in armor. That effort requires time. And it requires money. And if you want to know the worth of money, try to borrow some. It requires the development of improved infrastructure, better highways, more modern highways, up-to-date highways, safer highways, like those Appa-

lachian corridors that I have been trying for years to build, and for which I have been horse whipped orally and with the pen. I do not mind. I know for whom I am working. I am working for the people of West Virginia, and always will as long as the Lord lets me stand.

Water and sewer systems, accessible health care, safe schools—these are the kinds of basic facilities and programs that I have been promoting for many years. I do not carry my banner today and throw it down when the speech is over and go on somewhere else. Those coal miners are still there. And they are going to still have my attention, my respect, my reverence.

In a letter threatening a veto of legislation containing this amendment, the White House claimed to be prepared to discuss a solution that would ensure that "any adverse impacts on mining communities in West Virginia are minimized." Well, talk is cheap. But any real solution to minimize economic impact on these West Virginian communities won't be cheap.

Back in July, the President of the United States appeared in Hazard, KY, where he delivered an address to the people of Appalachia. Appalachia is my home. I was married there. Our first daughter was born there. Our second daughter was born there. I went to school there. I graduated from high school there in Appalachia.

The President of the United States expressed great sympathy for the economic distress in these mountainous States. It was an uplifting speech. He is very capable of giving uplifting speeches. It was a speech that reached out to the human spirit and built great expectations. Calling on corporate America to invest in rural America, President Clinton said: "This is a time to bring more jobs and investment and hope to the areas of our country that have not fully participated in this economic recovery." And I say: Amen, brother! Amen.

I agree with that message. It is the right thing to do. We should be bringing jobs to Appalachia. We should be bringing new businesses, too. But how can one peddle hope while undercutting the real jobs and businesses that do exist in Appalachia? If we don't act now, if the court lifts its stay, we will be back here a few months from now battling this issue all over again. It may not just be West Virginia then. It may be your own States, Senators. It may be your people, Senators. It may be your families.

There may be an appeal of the judges ruling, and that appeal may lead to a more equitable outcome. However, that appeal may simply maintain the judge's decision and put us squarely back where we have been in recent weeks, trying to address the matter Congressionally—trying to reaffirm well-established Congressional intent that has been followed for the past 20 years while striving for improvements in the way mining is conducted.

In the meantime, with the scales tipped against them, mining families

must hold on to a crumbling ledge. The heel is poised above their fingertips, ready to mash down.

We have a pretty good idea who the opponents of this effort are. But what of the supporters? Let me tell you who is standing by us: The United Mine Workers of America; the National Mining Association; the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; the Bituminous Coal Operators Association; the AFL-CIO—hear that, White House, the AFL-CIO—the National Association of Manufacturers; the Association of American Railroads; the United Transportation Union; the Norfolk Southern Railroad; CSX Railroad; the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; the International Union of Operating Engineers; the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; the Transport Workers of America; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; the Utility Workers Union of America; American Electric Power.

You see, the environmentalists sent a letter to the White House, and they listed a few organizations that were supporting their opposition to this amendment. But listen to this list, too. This amendment has its friends.

I continue with the reading of the list: the Southern States Energy Board; the Southern Company; the United Steelworkers of America; the Independent Steelworkers Union—it isn't just coal miners, you see; these are brothers—the Laborers International Union of North America; the American Truckers Association; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; the American Waterways Operators; the International Union of Transportation Communications; the American Federation of Teachers; the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the American Federation of Government Employees—White House, it isn't just ROBERT BYRD and MITCH MCCONNELL and JAY ROCKEFELLER and Senator BUNNING, PETE DOMENICI, LARRY CRAIG, and PHIL GRAMM, and the fine Senator who sits in the Chair, PAT ROBERTS. It isn't just these. It isn't just the House delegation, the three Members of the House from West Virginia. These are not alone.

It is also the National Council of Senior Citizens.

These groups—representing millions of citizens—agree with us that a legislative remedy is needed, and is needed now. They agree that there must be a balanced approach. What this amendment does is simple. It establishes a fair, moderate balance between jobs and the environment, while also providing for additional review and regulation once the environmental impact study is complete.

It is time to put aside whatever animosity exists between the coal mining industry and the environmental movement.

I am not much for making predictions, but I can make this one: the

coming years will bring us more challenges like this, when the environment and the economy must be harmonized. Today is a test of our ability to deal those challenges ahead.

This nation can put a man on the moon. Surely, we can adopt a solution to this problem that protects the environment and protects jobs of the coal fields.

This amendment seeks to go back to the regulations and the agreements that made up the status quo ante before the judge's order—that is all we ask—the status quo ante agreed upon by the administration's EPA, by the administration's Army Corps of Engineers, by the administration's Department of the Interior, the Office of Surface Mining. That is what we ask. And we ask not only for justice, but we ask also for mercy for the coal miners and the other working people of America.

I ask unanimous consent that the names of the cosponsors and sponsors of this amendment be printed in the RECORD, and they are as follows:

Senators BYRD, MCCONNELL, ROCKEFELLER, BUNNING, REID, CRAIG, BRYAN, HATCH, BENNETT, MURKOWSKI, CRAPO, ENZI, BURNS, and KYL. I have not put forth any big effort to shop this around. I also add Senators BREAUX, SHELBY, GRAMM, and GRAMS, as cosponsors.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business until the hour of 5 p.m. and that the time be divided in the usual form.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BYRD-MCCONNELL MINING AMENDMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I first thank my friend from West Virginia for his leadership on this extraordinarily important issue to my State and to his and, for that matter, to all the people of Appalachia where coal is mined.

Thanks to my friend from West Virginia, I had a unique experience last week. As the proud possessor of a zero rating from the AFL-CIO, I had never been invited to a rally by the United Mine Workers of America. Thanks to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, who I assume warned the crowd to say nice things or at least to refrain from throwing anything, I joined him on the west front of the Capitol last Tuesday and had an opportunity to watch Senator BYRD in action in a different environment. I have seen him many times on the floor, always persuasive and always effective, but never before a rally largely of his

people and my people who make their livelihood mining coal.

I must say, it was a memorable experience. If I ever do my memoirs, I say to my friend from West Virginia, that experience will be in it. We have joined together today. And there are many others on this side of the aisle, and I hope we will have some on that side of the aisle, who have had enough of this administration declaring war on legal industries engaged in an honest effort to keep the engines of this country moving forward. We have a number of Republican Senators from the West, and they all informed us over the years about the war on the West. Senator DOMENICI and Senator CRAIG have educated some of us southerners about the problems they have had. And I am pleased to say I have supported them over the years, without exception, in their efforts to preserve those jobs in the mining industry out west.

Well, I would say the war on the West is moving east, and we are beginning to feel the sting. Even though this amendment was generated by a very poorly reasoned district court decision in the Federal court in West Virginia, let me say that is just the beginning, as the Senator from West Virginia has pointed out; it is just the beginning.

All the Byrd-McConnell amendment seeks to do—not just for coal mining but for hard rock mining as well—is to restore us to the existing law, at least with regard to coal mining, as the distinguished Senator from West Virginia has pointed out. The letter from the White House, from Chief of Staff John Podesta to the President, either lies or is woefully ill informed.

It is clear to this Senator that the people downtown don't care what the facts are. They don't care about the 20,000 coal miners in West Virginia and the 15,000 coal miners in Kentucky. They really don't care. I don't think they have bothered to read the amendment of the Senator from West Virginia because, as he pointed out a few moments ago with regard to coal mining, we are seeking to reestablish the status quo, agreed to and entered into by the most radical EPA in the history of the country. There is no question in my mind that whenever any environmental group in America hiccups, it is felt downtown. Anytime they object to anything, the administration falls in line.

It has been fascinating to watch this issue develop because it pits the environmentalists against the unions—truly a Hobson's choice for the administration. When they had to pick a side between the environmentalists and the coal miners in West Virginia and in Kentucky, it is pretty clear whose side they chose. They don't care about these jobs. They are not interested in reading this amendment. They really don't care what is in the amendment. They are willing to sacrifice the 20,000 coal-mining jobs in West Virginia and the 15,000 coal-mining jobs in Kentucky in order to score points with a lot of

environmentalists—who, I assume, enjoy having electricity all the time so they can read their reports—decrying the people who work in the industry so important to our States. Clinton and GORE are determined to put the agenda of the fringe environmental groups and Presidential political concerns ahead of the needs of coal miners in Appalachia.

As I said earlier in a colloquy with the Senator from West Virginia, and as he referred to in his speech, the President came to Appalachia last summer. He happened to have picked my State. He came to Hazard, KY. It was a large crowd. They were honored to have him there. The mayor of Hazard is still talking about it. It was one of the high points of his life. The President looked out at the people in Hazard, many of whom make a living in the coal mines, and he said, "I am here to help you."

Well, Mr. President, we need your help. I assume the whole idea behind coming to Kentucky was not to increase unemployment. My recollection of what that visit was about was how the Federal Government could actually produce new jobs for the mountains—something a lot of people have talked about and few have been able to deliver. Well, we would like to have new jobs, Mr. President, but I can tell you this: We would rather not lose any more of the few jobs we have remaining. That is not a step in the right direction.

We don't have as many coal jobs as we used to. The production is about the same. The employment is much smaller. Every time there has been an improvement in the coal-mining industry—whether on top of the mountain or underneath the mountain—safety has gone up, and that is important. But employment has gone down. We are not yet ready to walk away from coal in this country. We have not built a new nuclear plant in 20 years and are not likely to build any more. These people are engaged in an indispensable activity. They would like to have a little support from down on Pennsylvania Avenue. Where is the compassion? Where is the concern about these existing jobs in a critically important industry for our country?

Senator BYRD has really covered the subject, and there is not much I could add, other than just to read once again what this amendment is about. Nothing in our amendment modifies, supersedes, undermines, displaces, or amends any requirement of or regulation issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act, or the Surface Mining Act of 1977. So in response to this outrageous and ridiculous court decision, we have not proposed changing the law. The judge, in his decision, has made it clear that he expects us to clear this up. He is inviting us to legislate. That is what we are hoping to do.

The EPA, the Office of Surface Mining, the Corps of Engineers, and other