



July 11, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Sally Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear President Obama and Secretary Jewell,

As religious leaders in Washington, a state that will be impacted by the federal coal review, we thank you for conducting the first Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement of the federal coal program in 30 years. We know that we are long overdue to assess the true cost of coal on God's creation, our communities' health, and our local economies.

Religious leaders across the country are saying no to coal. Here in the Northwest, we have stood in solidarity with Native American tribes and local citizens in opposition to dirty and dangerous coal trains rumbling through our communities, and know that we can do better.

Coal mining's impact on land, water, and creatures has not been adequately accounted for, nor its impact on the climate. An aspect of the coal economy that has long been overlooked is in the tax system. Local communities that should have received millions in royalties to support schools, libraries, roads, and other projects for the common good, have not gotten their fair share. We are also aware that rising rates of asthma and other maladies that relate to mercury exposure and air quality must be counted when we consider the coal's impact on communities. We look forward to seeing the federal government recognize the true cost of coal through this review process.

At the same time, we know that changes in the marketplace for coal have and will continue to impact jobs in our communities. We are preparing for the pastoral, as well as practical impacts. However, we also believe that any responsible federal coal review process should include a robust plan and discussion around ensuring that coal workers are cared for, and that they will have new economic opportunities available to them.

Please consider religious communities as partners as you forge a new pathway forward.

In hope,

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