

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



August 31, 2016

Dear President Obama and Secretary Jewell,

As religious leaders in states 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.

Coal mining's impact on land, water, and creatures has not been adequately accounted for, nor its impact on the climate. 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 coal's impact on communities. Another 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 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 impacted, and will continue to impact, jobs in our communities. We are preparing for the pastoral, as well as practical impacts. Any responsible federal coal review process should include a robust plan built on stakeholder input that ensures coal-dependent communities 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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