

Request to submit a statement and oral presentation to the public hearing for the Grassy Mountain Coal Project.

Organization: Eco-Elders for Climate Action – representing a group of Alberta seniors concerned about the environment we are leaving to our grandchildren.

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Summary statement

Current situation

This land holds many valued components - magnificent landscapes supporting varied ecosystems – a bounty of wild species and pure headwaters, clean air, fresh winds, and a balance of rain fall and sunshine supporting an active range land to the east. These components must be left to our grandchildren as they make a life for themselves and their families. As Albertans we must be proud and ethical stewards of these components entrusted to us.

Our position

The proposed project will negatively impact these components of our land and cause significantly adverse environmental effects well into the future. And, that our grandchildren's health, livelihoods and survival on this land will be diminished because of this project. **We are speaking for them in this proceeding.**

Impact of the Proposed Coal Project

The mine proposal represents multiple and direct assaults on the legacy we must leave to our grandchildren and future generations:

On the Environment

Open-pit mining is by definition a permanent change to the landscape; while it may be rehabilitated it cannot be restored. Coal is the worst of fossil fuels in terms of impacts to the atmosphere, especially in relation to climate change and health damaging particulates. The exposure of mined coal to the atmosphere releases selenium which

washes into rivers polluting the waters. These waters not only support an ecosystem and provide waters to areas east, they provide drinking water to the communities of the Crowsnest area.

On the Present Economy

While recognizing the economic and employment opportunities coal mining may present in the short term, this must be balanced against the multiple pressures already on the earth and its atmosphere. The damage that will be caused – to the land, air, water, and affected communities will continue forever. The short time that the Australian Benga Mines will be profitable and extracting from Canada is not worth the devastation that will be wreaked upon us.

On Future Financial Burdens

Extraction industries have a well-established record of walking away from their responsibilities once the money stops flowing. To \$260 Billion in environmental liabilities we have as a province, this project could well add an additional financial burden on future generations. Green technologies are currently being pioneered elsewhere which will change the production of steel away from the use of metallurgic coal. Swedish Steel promises this product will be available to the markets within the decade.

Alternative Vision for Alberta

Alberta's current economic problems are the result of a singular long-term commitment to, and reliance on fossil fuels. It is time to re-imagine Alberta's economy, and take bold steps into the future to diversify the economy – steps which not only address the current generation but which offer hope and opportunity to future generations. Stepping back fifty years to the coal era is not the way forward. We need to acknowledge the damage of past generations, limit the damage done by our current generation, and create a sustainable economy for the future. This will require enlightened vision and investment from our political leaders, not the grasping, myopic vision that has allowed such a project as this to be considered. **We request this project not be allowed to further burden our grandchildren's generation.**

Thank you.

END