
No to buying coal from MTR coal mining in North Carolina

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Recently, North Carolina State Representative Ms Pricey Harrison introduced legislation in the state House that would ban the burning of coal obtained through mountaintop removal mining. If it passes, North Carolina would become the first state in US with such a law.

Ms Harrison, a Democrat who represents Guilford County, told Grist that she learned about the hazards of the practice by doing a flyover of West Virginian mountains that had been destroyed by MTR, and by watching the documentary Mountain Top Removal. Since there aren't regions in her state likely to be affected by the practice, banning the burning of MTR coal seemed like the most logical way to take action. She said "I think if enough states got together and did this, then it would create momentum and give some courage to policy makers in West Virginia who might otherwise feel beholden to Big Coal. We are destroying a heritage in Appalachia, so I just hope we can send a signal that this is not acceptable and this has got to stop."

MTR blasts off mountaintops for the purpose of extracting coal, wiping out bio diverse forest habitats and permanently scarring the world's oldest mountains. The debris left over from the blasts is usually dumped in nearby streams. According to the US EPA, more than 700 miles of streams have been completely buried by mountaintop removal debris and thousands of others have been damaged. MTR also causes myriad health problems for nearby residents, in part because mine waste contaminates water supplies.

According to Appalachian Voices, a group devoted to ending the controversial and destructive mining practice, 13 power plants in North Carolina buy coal from mountaintop removal mine sites. Most of it comes from nearby West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia.

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