
SUBSTITUTE SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8015

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Swecker, Oke, McDonald, Wojahn, Deccio, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Rasmussen and Winsley)

Read first time 02/16/95.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
5 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AND TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE
6 OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING:

7 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
8 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
9 represent and petition as follows:

10 WHEREAS, The preservation and enhancement of wetlands is extremely
11 important to the state of Washington to protect wildlife habitat and
12 viable waterfowl nesting areas; and

13 WHEREAS, The Federal Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act
14 both place a high priority on the creation or restoration of wetland
15 areas; and

16 WHEREAS, The Centralia Mining Company is the largest surface coal
17 mining operation in the state and is unique among surface mines because
18 of its location in Western Washington, which incurs a relatively high
19 rainfall and can support healthy rechargeable wetlands; and

20 WHEREAS, The Centralia Mining Company has been diligent in its
21 extraordinary reclamation efforts and concern for the environment as

1 exemplified in their honor of receiving the prestigious directors'
2 award from the Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, in
3 1991, and receiving a national award from the Office of Surface Mining
4 for excellence in surface mining reclamation including the
5 environmental benefits their wetlands play in enhancing natural
6 wildlife and waterfowl habitat in 1994; and

7 WHEREAS, Ducks Unlimited, the largest private wetland conservation
8 organization in the world, has affirmed their support for the need for
9 the deep lake-like systems, intermediate-sized marsh areas, smaller
10 seasonal wetlands, riparian stringers, and other wetlands which have
11 been created on the Centralia Mining Company property; and

12 WHEREAS, The Centralia Mining Company location is in close
13 proximity to the migration pattern of numerous species of ducks and
14 geese; and

15 WHEREAS, Surface mining creates many opportunities for innovative
16 final land uses during the ongoing reclamation process which could
17 enable the development of new wetlands that can enhance fish and
18 wildlife habitat as well as the development of recreational lakes for
19 the enjoyment of Washington citizens; and

20 WHEREAS, The Centralia Mining Company is regulated by the
21 Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining, and the
22 provisions of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act; and

23 WHEREAS, The Office of Surface Mining rules and regulations for
24 land reclamation have been very stringent and restrictive and require
25 former-mined areas to be returned to the same land contours as prior to
26 being mined; and

27 WHEREAS, There were limited wetland areas prior to the commencement
28 of mining at the Centralia mine and if the regulations do not allow for
29 a variance, then the mine would be obligated to eventually destroy
30 certain wetland areas and lakes that have been created in the mining
31 process; and

32 WHEREAS, The Office of Surface Mining has recently been
33 reevaluating their position regarding the retention and creation of
34 wetlands in reclaimed mine areas;

35 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the Office
36 of Surface Mining continue to be encouraged to expand its effort to
37 find ways to preserve wetlands of significant size and value that are
38 created as a result of substantial surface mining activities and to
39 amend its rules and regulations in order to recognize the climatic

1 differences of surface mine operations in differing regions throughout
2 the United States and to allow the states to encourage their local
3 mining industries to take advantage of the unique opportunities to
4 preserve and enhance wetlands for the benefit of wildlife, fisheries,
5 and recreation.

6 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
7 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United
8 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives, each member of Congress from the State of
10 Washington, the Secretary of the United States Department of the
11 Interior, and the Director of the Office of Surface Mining.

--- END ---