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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8015

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State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senators Fraser, Swecker, Oke, McDonald, Wojahn, Deccio, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Rasmussen and Winsley

Read first time 02/06/95. Referred to Committee on Ecology & Parks.

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 INTERIOR, AND TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE  
6 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 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 man-made wetlands which  
11 have 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 Interior, Office of Surface Mining, and the provisions of  
22 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 the  
30 man-made features, including wetland areas and lakes that have been  
31 created in the mining 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 man-made wetlands during surface mining  
38 reclamation and to amend its rules and regulations in order to  
39 recognize the climatic differences of surface mine operations in

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

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

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