

Guide To Participating In An Informal Public Conference

*By participating in this process, you will have accomplished one important step by putting government agencies, elected officials and the coal operator on notice that private citizens are watching them. The Surface Mining Control & Reclamation Act (SMCRA) grants affected citizens the broadest rights to participate in administrative and judicial proceedings ever granted in a Federal environmental statute. For each decision to grant a permit, SMCRA allows the citizen an informal conference.”**

This conference is your chance to be heard. **Anyone** may speak or submit a written statement. All concerns raised will be entered in the record and must be considered as part of the coal mining permit decision-making process. Don't be afraid to share your views. Even if you are not a geologist or mining engineer, you can still speak up. We are dealing with major life issues. Your opinions count. Please comment on how any part of your life may be affected if a permit to mine in your community is granted.

- State any errors that you know are in the permit application (such as missing or incorrectly located structures or utilities, missing water resources, etc.).
- State any special building features about your home or other buildings on your property (single support beams, stained glass windows, floor based heat, etc.)
- How will this affect your home, children, water, utilities, and animals?
- What will it do to your family's physical, emotional, and financial health?
- How will it affect property values, retirement plans, and personal privacy?
- What about the security of your house and belongings if you are evacuated?
- If you own a farm or business in the mining area, what will happen to it?
- Who will pay your Workman's Compensation if you have to lay off workers?
- Who will pay your lost income if you have to shut down temporarily?
- Will you lose customers or even your business itself?

This is an important opportunity for you to state your concerns and opinions about the mining permit application.

It is not a question and answer session.

“The law won't work unless citizens make it work.”*

**The Strip Mining Handbook: M. Squillance; copyright 1990: Friends of the Earth*