

PUBLIC HEARING
ON
GILBERTON COAL-TO-CLEAN FUELS AND POWER
PROJECT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY

BEFORE: Janice Bell, DOE Documents Manager
Roy Spears, DOE
Diane Madden, DOE, Project Manager
Ken Markel, DOE
Robert Miller, DOE

TIME: 7:03 p.m.

DATE: Monday, January 9, 2006

PLACE: Shenandoah Valley Jr./Sr. High School
Auditorium
805 West Center Street
Shenandoah, Pennsylvania 17976

COPY

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1 EIS.

2 Before we begin the formal comment process,
3 I'd like to make some introductions. We have -- at
4 the panel next to me, we have Ken Markel, Director of
5 the Office of Major Demonstrations at NETL; Diane
6 Revay Madden, Project Manager, National Energy
7 Technology Laboratory; Roy Spears, National Energy
8 Technology Laboratory. We also have Bob Miller of Oak
9 Ridge National Laboratory. Bob has led the team of
10 environmental experts that have developed this Draft
11 Environmental Impact Statement. Also in the audience,
12 we have representatives from our industrial
13 participant, WMPI.

14 And before we get started, let me point out
15 that the exits are located in the back of the room and
16 the restrooms are out towards the back of the room and
17 to the right.

18 Tonight's -- for tonight's agenda, there
19 will be a few brief presentations before we get
20 started. First, I'd like to explain the purpose of
21 the public hearing. Then Diane Revay Madden will
22 provide an overview of the Gilberton project. After
23 that, I will present a few slides on the National
24 Environmental Policy Act as well as the EIS process.
25 And finally, audience members, yourselves, will have

1 an opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental
2 Impact Statement.

3 As for our meeting purpose, why are we here
4 tonight? This evening is an opportunity for you to
5 comment on the Draft EIS. Incidentally, this Draft
6 EIS is made publicly available to those individuals
7 who requested to be on the mailing list at the
8 Department of Energy. In addition, copies were made
9 available at the following public libraries:
10 Pottsville Public Library, Frackville Public Library,
11 and Mahanoy City Public Library, as well as the
12 Mahanoy State Correctional Institution.

13 We want to emphasize this evening that your
14 comments are important. This is an opportunity for
15 you to present your concerns. Prior to this evening's
16 public hearing, there was an informal question and
17 answer session. And also, if you have additional
18 questions after the comments are presented, project
19 members and team members of our panel will be
20 available for informal discussions after the hearing.
21 However, panel members will not answer questions
22 during the formal hearing process. This is when your
23 comments are being transcribed by a court reporter.
24 And these proceedings will be made available to the
25 public and be part of the public record.

1 Let me emphasize that your comments are
2 very important to this process. We want to ensure
3 that DOE has considered all of the environmental
4 issues before making a final decision on the project.
5 DOE must consider each and every comment and respond
6 to each one, whether it's a verbal comment or a
7 written statement.

8 All comments presented this evening are
9 being transcribed by a court reporter for the public
10 record. Please note that in addition to the verbal
11 comments provided here today, we will be accepting
12 written comments that are received or postmarked by
13 February 8th, 2006.

14 Okay. At this time, I'd like to have Diane
15 Madden, the project manager, provide an overview of
16 the project.

17 MS. MADDEN: Hello. In fiscal year 2002,
18 the US Congress established the Clean Coal Power
19 Initiative Program. The purpose of this program is to
20 showcase technologies in which coal-fired power plants
21 can continue to generate low-cost electricity with
22 improved efficiency and in compliance with more
23 stringent environmental standards expected in the
24 future.

25 The Government assists the project

1 participant by sharing in the project costs. But
2 after successful demonstration of the technology, the
3 participant must repay the Government's costship.
4 Another requirement is that this repayment is done
5 within a 20-year period and that 75 percent of the
6 direct labor costs are U.S. labor.

7 After a thorough review of the proposal is
8 received from this competitive solicitation, the
9 Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels and Power Project was
10 one of the projects selected for award. This project
11 addresses a Congressional mandate to demonstrate
12 advanced coal-based technologies that can generate
13 cleaner, reliable, and affordable electricity in the
14 United States.

15 The participant, WMPI, has proposed a
16 leading technology and engineering team to design,
17 engineer, construct, and demonstrate the first clean
18 coal power and fuels facility in the United States
19 using coal waste gasification. WMPI's team members
20 include Nexant, Incorporated. They're an affiliate of
21 Bechtel Corporation. Shell Global Solution, an
22 international energy company with a major presence in
23 coal gasification technology. Uhde is a global
24 engineering company and authorized Shell gasification
25 technology supplier. And Sasol Technology Limited, a

1 world leader in Fischer-Tropsch liquefaction
2 technology.

3 This is a block-flow diagram of the
4 process. The individual technologies; that is, Shell
5 gasification technology and the Fischer-Tropsch
6 technology, have been independently operating. This
7 project would integrate and demonstrate the
8 integration of these technologies.

9 The culm, limestone, and oxygen are fed to
10 the gasifier to produce a synthesis gas composed
11 mainly of hydrogen and CO. The synthesis gas is
12 cooled and cleaned. The CO₂ and sulfur are removed;
13 and the clean synthesis gas is fed to the F-T units
14 and product workup where the product, they produce
15 diesel fuel and naphtha. The excess fuel gas from the
16 process and the steam generated in the process are fed
17 to the combined-cycle plant to generate the
18 electricity.

19 (A discussion was held off the record.)

20 MS. MADDEN: Again, this is the block-flow
21 diagram of the process. The individual technologies,
22 the Shell gasification technology and the
23 Fischer-Tropsch, as I said before, have been
24 independently operating. And this project would
25 demonstrate the integration of these technologies.

1 The anthracite culm and the fluxant, which is
2 limestone in this case, and the oxygen are fed to the
3 Shell gasifier. And they produce synthesis gas
4 composed mainly of hydrogen and CO. In the CO shift,
5 the syngas cleaning unit, the syngas is cooled, fine
6 particles are removed in the cyclone and filters and
7 the CO is shifted to CO₂. And then that gas is sent
8 to a Rectisol unit to produce hydrogen sulfide, which
9 is sent to a Claus plant and sulfur is, elemental
10 sulfur comes off. The CO₂ is also removed from the
11 syngas, and then the remaining gas is sent to the
12 Fischer-Tropsch unit. The Fischer-Tropsch unit then,
13 that unit and the product workup unit will then make
14 the diesel fuel and the naphtha. The remaining excess
15 fuel gas is sent to a combined-cycle plant which is,
16 has a combustion turbine to burn the gas and create
17 steam. And that and the excess steam created in the
18 process are fed to a steam turbine to also generate
19 electricity. And that amount coming out of the plant
20 is 42 megawatts.

21 The water going back to the mine pool will
22 actually be cleaner than the water going out of the
23 mine pool.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Then why doesn't that
25 show that on there?

1 MS. MADDEN: Because this is just a basic
2 block-flow diagram. If you wanted to see more
3 details, I have another that has like 30 blocks or
4 40 blocks on it. For this meeting, I just didn't want
5 to put that up. But I'll gladly show you one.

6 MR. MARKEL: Wait a minute. Questions will
7 be, or comments will come later. Please. The court
8 reporter needs the microphone for the --

9 (A discussion was held off the record.)

10 MS. BELL: We need to make sure we get
11 everything on the transcripts. And we weren't able to
12 hear you. So I hope whenever you make your comments,
13 you can repeat those comments.

14 Okay. Now I'd like to take a minute to go
15 over what happens in the NEPA review process. The
16 driving force behind developing an Environmental
17 Impact Statement is the National Environmental Policy
18 Act, also known as NEPA. This federal law applies to
19 all major federal actions taken by federal agencies.
20 It is a national charter for protection of the
21 environment.

22 The mandate of NEPA is the, is the -- I'm
23 sorry. The mandate of NEPA is to make environmental
24 information available to the public before final
25 decisions are made on federally funded projects that

1 could significantly affect the quality of the human
2 environment.

3 The objectives of NEPA are: NEPA
4 emphasizes the need to make well-informed decisions
5 based on the potential environmental consequences of a
6 proposed action. DOE wants to take actions that
7 protect, restore, and enhance the environment. The
8 focus is on truly significant issues. We are asking
9 that you comment on the issues identified in the Draft
10 EIS so that the Federal Government can make the best
11 decision possible.

12 According to the Council on Environmental
13 Quality, regulations for implementation of NEPA, the
14 required contents of an EIS are those that are listed
15 here. Some are fairly straightforward. The cover
16 sheet, summary, and table of contents, statement of
17 purpose and need for the agency action. We need to
18 examine the reasonable alternatives. We need to
19 define the characteristics of the affected
20 environment. And we need to examine environmental
21 consequences of the proposed action and alternatives.
22 We also need to list all the agencies, organizations,
23 and persons to whom the document was sent and the list
24 of preparers and an index.

25 when you came in tonight, you saw a poster.

1 And it's the same one that's shown here. This is the
2 process that an Environmental, Environmental Impact
3 Statement will go through. Initially -- and this is
4 back in April of 2003 -- the Department of Energy
5 issued a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental
6 Impact Statement for the Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels
7 and Power Project. There was a public scoping period
8 for 30 days. During that public scoping period, a
9 public scoping meeting was conducted in Pottsville on
10 May 5th. At that point, all the comments that were
11 taken at the scoping meeting were used to develop the
12 outline for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

13 And over the past year and a half, the
14 document is developed. And the Draft Environmental
15 Impact Statement that, it was issued on December 8th,
16 2005. That began a public comment period, which is
17 normally 45 days. During that public comment period
18 is when we have our public hearing, which is what
19 you're doing tonight. You're participating in a
20 public hearing. Like I said, normally it's a 45-day
21 comment period. But with the holidays and all the
22 other things that occur at this time of the year, we
23 had extended that to 62 days. So the public comment
24 period we'll extend to February 8th, 2006. At that
25 time, we'll take all the comments, written and oral.

1 And anything that's left at the toll-free number will
2 be considered. Those will be transcribed. And those
3 comments will, each and every one will be considered
4 and responded to in a draft, draft -- or I'm
5 sorry -- the Final Environmental Impact Statement.
6 That will be issued for comment, the final. And then
7 after 30 days, our Assistant Secretary For Fossil
8 Energy will make a record of decision, will sign the
9 record of the decision on the process, on the project.

10 Okay. Now to what you came here for, the
11 public, to make your public comments. I'd like -- I'm
12 going to call the registered speakers to the podium
13 first. I ask that you take 5 minutes to make your
14 comments. If you need additional time, we probably
15 will have some time at the end of the meeting, you can
16 return to the podium if you'd like. Or if, while
17 you're sitting there, you think that you want to say
18 something, I would appreciate if you let someone in
19 the back know. Otis, our media advisor, is back
20 there. You can let him know. Sign up with him, and
21 he'll get your name to the front of the room to make
22 comments.

23 I just want you to know everything that's
24 said here tonight is being transcribed by a court
25 reporter. So when you come to the microphone, please

1 state your name clearly. Do a little better than I
2 did at the beginning here tonight. And please spell
3 your name for the court reporter so that she is able
4 to get it correct. And also, if you feel
5 uncomfortable making a verbal comment this evening,
6 there are plenty of comment cards out front. Feel
7 free to write your comments down. And there are
8 self-addressed envelopes already prepared. All you
9 need to do is stick a comment in the envelope, put it
10 in the mail. It will get to one of us at the
11 Department of Energy.

12 Okay. I believe my first speaker is Ed
13 Pautienus. And I guess we have a timer here. So
14 after 5 minutes, we'll let you know. We hope you keep
15 to 5 minutes. And then if we have additional time at
16 the end, we'll let you continue.

17 MR. PAUTIENUS: Good evening. My name is
18 Ed Pautienus, P-a-u-t-i-e-n-u-s. I live at 1311 Main
19 Street, Maizeville, M-a-i-z-e-v-i-l-l-e, Gilberton,
20 Pennsylvania 17934-1040.

21 I have 40 pages of testimony, and I'm
22 confined to 5 minutes. I imagine everybody in here
23 knows what BS is. MS is more of the same stuff. And
24 PhD is just piled higher deeper. And I'm sick of the
25 PhD's telling me how wonderful this coal gasification

1 and cogeneration plants are for our area. If these
2 plants are so great, before the construction, during
3 the construction and after the completion of the
4 plant, what I would suggest, that the companies
5 involved put up a security bond of 10 percent of the
6 cost of the project. The suggested cost of the
7 project is \$610 million. Five years ago, it was only
8 310 million. What I'm saying is the company should
9 have this security bond in place. And if they do any,
10 any damage to any individuals or any humans or any of
11 the environment, you can go to the security bond and
12 collect your money.

13 Nobody has the right to poison our
14 environment. We all have a right to clean air and to
15 drink pure water. There is no actual law which gives
16 any company or any individual the right to pollute.
17 They simply assume it.

18 There are so many conflicting reports where
19 this plant is going to be located. When I read, when
20 I read the approved air emissions programs from DEP in
21 Wilkes-Barre, the plant is in two townships, Mahanoy
22 Township and West Mahanoy Township. There's a big
23 difference in where the plant is going to be location,
24 located. If it's located in West Mahanoy Township,
25 they're no longer in the KOZ zone. If they're located

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1 in Mahanoy Township, they're located in a KOZ zone.
 2 In a KOZ zone, they pay nothing. For 10 years, it's a
 3 freebee. No income tax, no sales tax, no tax. You
 4 name it. It's a given.

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5 I have a couple comments. One of them is
 6 for our good Governor, Fast Eddie. I'd like him to
 7 read the Pennsylvania Constitution. And I'm going to
 8 quote him a section, and maybe somebody in Harrisburg
 9 can find it for him. The Pennsylvania Constitution,
 10 Section 27 states, The people have a right to clean
 11 air, pure water, and to the preservation of natural,
 12 scenic, historic, aesthetic values of the environment.
 13 Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common
 14 property of all the people, including the generations
 15 to come. As a trustee of these resources, the
 16 Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the
 17 benefit of all the people.

18 One thing I want to just briefly say is
 19 this: I will guarantee you, guarantee you -- I lived
 20 in Africa for three years -- the smell, the stench
 21 that's going to come off this coal gasification
 22 program is hydrogen sulfide. And for you people that
 23 don't know what hydrogen sulfide smells like, it
 24 smells like rotten eggs. And depending on which way
 25 the wind is blowing, that's who's going to smell this

1 24/7, 7 days a week, 365 years, 365 days a year.
2 Believe me. I might sound like the voice of doom
3 right now. But if and when this plant is built, you
4 people will smell it.

5 I have 4 pages on mercury alone. But in 5
6 minutes, I can't take up mercury. But I'll tell you
7 one thing. One-seventieth of a teaspoon of mercury in
8 a 25-acre lake makes the lake contaminated. From
9 Ravine to Hazleton, we have 43 reservoirs that 150,000
10 people depend on their drinking water for. We have
11 two wonderful state parks, Locust Lake State Park,
12 Tuscarora State Park. Let me tell you one thing. To
13 all you fishermen in here, you eat 5 fish a week out
14 of Locust Lake or Tuscarora State Park, you're going
15 to start to glow or you're going to get Alzheimer's
16 and you're not going to remember what the hell is
17 going on because it's contaminated with arsenic and
18 mercury.

19 Now, I look, I'm getting the 5-minute
20 warning; and I'm not even off the first page. So I'll
21 have to abide by the rules and regulations. Anybody
22 wants to talk to me about this, I'll be available
23 after the meeting. And I'll turn it over to the next
24 speaker. Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 MS. BELL: You will have an opportunity to
 2 come back if we have some time at the end. Our next
 3 speaker will be Sharon Chiao.

4 MS. CHIAO: Good evening. My name is
 5 Sharon Chiao, C-h-i-a-o; and I live in Morea. And I'm
 6 the Chairman of the Mahanoy Township Supervisors. I
 7 would like to begin talking with a quote from an
 8 October 2005 Time Magazine article that I just read
 9 called The Broken Promise. This is the quote from
 10 that article. It says, Washington has a rich history
 11 of catering to special and corporate interests at the
 12 expense of ordinary citizens, end of quote.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Amen.

14 MS. CHIAO: In the weekend Pottsville
 15 Republican, WMPI's Mr. Rich, he insists that there are
 16 opponents out there who are overstating the
 17 contaminants that are potentially produced by this
 18 process by listing the upper permit limits in the
 19 company's Environmental Impact Statement. And they
 20 keep saying they possibly will not likely be reached.
 21 I can't understand why there's so many comments in
 22 this Impact Statement such as maybe, if, likely, could
 23 be, possibly. Give us some definites. Tell us what's
 24 going to happen to us.

25 And I really have concerns when I read the

S2-1

1 Impact Statement as who all had a hand in writing it.
2 I know there's a list in the back of the book. But it
3 sounds very familiar to all of the propaganda that
4 we've been given out in the last few years.

5 And I wondered why there's so many specs in
6 that Impact Statement concerning Pottsville. This
7 plant is not being built in Pottsville. And
8 Pottsville's name is repeated in the article so many
9 times. This is being built in Mahanoy Township. In
10 the one section of the, the Impact Statement, it says
11 that sulfur dioxide will pose no problems. Toward the
12 back of the Impact Statement, it says that the plant
13 averaged three complaints a month about the rotten-egg
14 odor from the hydrogen sulfate which occurs at the
15 plant's lowest emission. So even at its lowest
16 emission, there will be odor.

17 Mr. Rich also stated to the newspaper that
18 opponents are opposing this effort to curb an
19 estimated \$630 million a day spent on imported oil.
20 This is not true. The majority of us, all of us buy
21 gas and we heat our house with fuel oil. We are
22 concerned with the price of oil. So it's not that
23 we're trying to, to prevent it.

24 On page 4-34 of the Impact Statement, it
25 says that during the construction of these proposed

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S2-3

S2-4

1 facilities, that potential health impacts to the
2 public could result from fugitive dust emissions into
3 the atmosphere; however, these impacts will only last
4 a short time.

5 How long does it take to hurt a person's
6 health? we're not concerned with a short time or a
7 long time. We don't want a health hazard for our
8 health. And I will firmly state that all of my
9 concerns are for the health and safety of the township
10 where I live and serve.

11 The issue of water is very, very important.
12 Seven million gallons of water a day we hear. That's
13 more than two-thirds that Schuylkill County uses in a
14 day. Also on the Impact Statement on pages 3-17, it
15 speaks of the Morea Citizens Water Company and its
16 residents who will have the option to go on public
17 water. Morea has 105 homes, 350 residents, and 16 new
18 homes up on the Morea highway which are all on well
19 water. The Morea Citizens Water Company has been in
20 existence since 1949 and has never been a day without
21 water. Now big brother's coming in, and he's telling
22 us that we should dissolve our company and go to a
23 public water source. No thank you big brother. The
24 residents of Morea are quite satisfied with their
25 current water system, and they don't want to be

S2-4

1 destroyed because someone is throwing their power
2 around.

3 And then there's the issue of employment.
4 Page 4-23 states that the project will have a
5 short-term effect on employment and income in this
6 region because most of the direct and indirect and
7 induced jobs during the construction will be done by
8 workers who currently reside within an hour's driving
9 time of the project. And this also assumes -- this is
10 from the statement, from the Impact Statement -- that
11 none of these indirect or induced work force would
12 relocate to this project area.

13 And then there's the issues of the
14 prisoners. This project will be 2,600 feet west of
15 the Mahanoy State Correctional Institute. There are
16 2,200 inmates there and 570 employees. In case of
17 emergency, how do you relocate this large number of
18 inmates safely? This is a maximum security prison.

19 More importantly, how do you bus our
20 children from nearby Mahanoy Area District and their
21 teaching staff to a safe facility in case of an
22 accident or an explosion?

23 Impact Statement 4-34 says, okay, the
24 probability that a failure could result in a fire or
25 explosion is estimated to be one out of 40. I would

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S2-6

1 like to buy a lottery ticket on that chance.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. BELL: Thank you, Sharon. Our next
4 speaker will be John Gera.

5 MR. GERA: Hello. I would like to ask for
6 a moment of silence for the sick, dying, and the dead
7 because of our government's refusal to stop the
8 pollution.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. GERA: Thank you. Asbestos and Freon,
11 two items that the government said was okay to use,
12 both now banned. After saying it was safe, our
13 government encouraged people to view nuclear atomic
14 bombs exploding in Nevada. This was later proven to
15 be fatal to the people viewing.

16 Our government allowing the use of lead in
17 gasoline, this was later proven to be harmful to human
18 life and the environment. Our government lies to us.

19 Jack Rich said there will be no waste from
20 the cogeneration plants; he will make bricks and patio
21 block out of the fly ash. Jack Rich lies. Jack Rich
22 companies also pollute. So when the Department of
23 Energy said they did an impact study, this also is a
24 lie because if the Department of Energy did an impact
25 study, this project would have been stopped.

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(Applause.)

MR. GERA: Short list of area pollution:

Home heating - oil burners, coal, wood stoves; fly ash used as antiskid for roads and landfill which gets into the air and water; biosolids and dredge; pesticides; Centralia mine fire; Interstate 81 - dump trucks, cars, idling trucks at the new warehouse sites being loaded and unloaded; foundries - Goulds Pumps, Ashland; Quirin Foundry, St. Clair; Alcoa, and so on; active and old landfills - Pine Grove, Frackville, Shenandoah; sewage plants; red rivers and streams; acid water/acid rain; prisons; pollution from the government's superfund cleanup sites; 7 or 8 cogeneration plants in this area; Rich's company polluting drinking water wells in a large area in Frackville.

It will cost more to make this fuel than they can sell it for. So this means the taxpayer will subsidize the difference. The taxpayer will help to pay for building this project and get no benefit in return. The public will be harmed by this project from all of the types of pollution coming from this project. And if this becomes another government superfund cleanup site, the taxpayer will pay to clean up the site.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MR. GERA: Questions for the Department of
 3 Energy, DOE: Why should a hundred million dollar
 4 grant be given for old obsolete technology? Why is
 5 the DOE funding fossil fuel research? Did the DOE add
 6 in their study all the other polluters in this area?
 7 Did the DOE add in their study all the pollution
 8 already in this area like in my list given before?
 9 Did the DOE add in their study the 7 or 8 cogeneration
 10 plants? Did the DOE study the impact the weather,
 11 cloud cover, fog and climate in this area will have on
 12 this project? Did the DOE study the high numbers of
 13 illnesses in this area because of pollution like the
 14 high rate of cancer, asthma, heart disease?

S3-2

S3-3

S3-4

S3-5

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. GERA: Did the DOE study what effects
 17 an accident such as explosion, fire, or release of
 18 deadly gasses at this project will have on the
 19 hundreds of prisoners locked in their cells, the
 20 prison guards and workers at the state prison just a
 21 few feet from this project? How and where will the
 22 byproducts and waste material from this project be
 23 disposed of? Did the DOE study the Pennsylvania
 24 Department of Environmental Protection and its
 25 secretary, Kathleen A. McGinty, to see if they can be

S3-6

S3-7

1 trusted to protect the public safety and health?

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. GERA: This coal-to-oil project must be
4 stopped. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. BELL: Thank you, John. I want to ask
7 that everyone, when you're making your comments, can
8 we please keep the comments to the Draft EIS and the
9 project. And let's try to avoid personal attacks when
10 we make these comments. Our next speaker --

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. BELL: Our next speaker will be Evelyn
13 Andrews.

14 MS. ANDREWS: Thank you. My name is Evelyn
15 Andrews. I live in Frackville. And I am absolutely
16 positively opposed to this, as everyone has known,
17 every meeting we've ever had. I am opposed to this.
18 First of all --

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. ANDREWS: First of all, when they show
21 you a pretty picture of the process of how this is
22 going to be done, they didn't show where will the
23 water come into this and where will it go to? Mr.
24 Rich has touted the fact that he will clean the mines
25 of all of that mine water; he will take all that mine

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S4-2

1 water out of there and it won't go into the streams
2 and it won't contaminate the water, it won't
3 contaminate the ground, it won't get into the water
4 supply by going into the ground.

5 But yet from what I'm understanding -- and
6 she just said -- it will go back into the mine
7 pool, the 7 million gallon of water a day that will be
8 used in this process. And then they're going to take
9 it out of the mine, they're going to clean it, use it
10 because acidic water will not be conducive to this
11 process. So they will clean the water, and they will
12 use it. And the water that's left over that is even
13 more contaminated than what they've taken out of the
14 mine pool, they're going to put it back into the mine
15 pool to get into the streams to kill everything it
16 touches, to get into the groundwater --

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. ANDREWS: -- and to contaminate
19 everything. This is horrendous. This is outrageous
20 that anyone would allow this to happen. All the
21 municipalities around here have either governments,
22 councils, supervisors, or whatever. And if you have a
23 problem, you usually go to your township or your
24 borough and you say the intersection at First and
25 Second Street is very dangerous; the children are

S4-3

1 there; the people are trying to cross; we need a stop
2 sign or maybe we need a light. But at least you have
3 somewhere to go and complain. Right now, we don't see
4 any of the people that we elected to protect us and
5 speak on our behalf and say we need one hell of a big
6 stop sign.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. ANDREWS: I have talked to many of the
9 elected officials. I don't see any of them here
10 tonight. I think the lights in the State House are
11 out. I think it's time we sent them all back to the
12 farm and got all new people in there that will listen
13 to what we're saying.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. ANDREWS: We do not want this
16 pollution. We do not want the water contaminated. We
17 don't want sick children, and we don't want the
18 elderly suffering.

19 I'm a basketball fan. And I find it so
20 irate that when I go to a basketball game and on the
21 bench where the players have gotten up are all of
22 these atomizers. They all have asthma. They can't
23 run up and down the floor without coming back and
24 pumping some air into their lungs. Whatever happened
25 to our beautiful, wonderful clean air and clean water?

1 Once this water is contaminated, how do you think
2 they're going to uncontaminate it? They'll move on to
3 the next community that will accept their garbage.
4 why do we have all of these cogeneration plants in one
5 specific place? Don't you ever look at what's an
6 overload? Don't you ever look at where, hey, enough
7 is enough?

8 I think it's positively outrageous that we
9 have to accept garbage, prisons, cogeneration plants.
10 And then the first thing they tout is jobs, jobs.
11 well, guess what? They went out on the mountain and
12 they started chasing the people that have the job just
13 like cockroaches, all illegal Mexicans running into
14 the bush. That's the kind of jobs that they produce.

15 So come on people. Wake up. We need that
16 big stop sign, and we need to send these people back
17 to the farm unless they're going to speak on our
18 behalf because if they don't speak to DEP and say I
19 don't think my constituents are being treated fairly
20 or if they don't go to EPA and say, Look, I think
21 there's a problem here, we're being inundated with a
22 lot of garbage at one time, then it's time we got them
23 out of there and put somebody new in. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. BELL: Okay. Our next speaker will be

S4-4

1 Sharon Pagnotti.

2 MS. PAGNOTTI: My name is Sharon Pagnotti,
3 P-a-g-n-o-t-t-i; and I reside in New Boston with my
4 mother. My late husband, Joseph Pagnotti, owns the
5 coal business, Pagnotti Enterprises.

6 It's very sad to see the Riches and the
7 gasification plant that they want to build and not
8 tell the people and be truthful with them. I'm very
9 saddened. I was in Georgia for two years. And this
10 area -- I came back to this area, and it is so
11 depressed. People can't get any jobs. The union jobs
12 are gone. They sold out the union. All the banks and
13 everything else, it's not union anymore. They're not
14 paying the people what they should be. We're in a
15 wal-Mart area. That's what they want. We're in a
16 depressed area. Schuylkill County is very, very bad.
17 The people aren't getting paid what they should be.
18 They're ruining the environment. I can't, I just
19 can't understand how you people could sit there and
20 let this happen to great Schuylkill County. It's just
21 amazing. Our taxes are way up. The elderly can't
22 even afford to pay them.

23 When the cogenerations were brought in
24 here, they said our electricity was going to be down;
25 we're going to have, benefit from all of these

1 cogeneration plants. Who benefitted from them? The
 2 prison, the businesses. Not your local people. Not
 3 your residents. Everything is up. The coal, you
 4 can't go and buy a good ton of coal anymore because
 5 they raise the prices when the oil prices go up. It
 6 is amazing here.

7 I am just, just saddened by this whole
 8 thing. And I do not think that a gasification plant
 9 should be put here until they come up with the truth
 10 and let us know what's going on. That's it.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. BELL: Thank you, Sharon. Our next
 13 speaker is David Houck.

14 MR. HOUCK: Thanks. I'll keep it brief and
 15 to the study. I'm sorry. David Houck, H-o-u-c-k.
 16 Section 6 of the study -- I advise everyone to pick up
 17 a copy of this. This is free. It's paid for by your
 18 tax dollars already. Section 6, the cumulative
 19 effects, fails to look at the future expansion planned
 20 by WMPI for this facility, an expansion which they've
 21 bragged about in news articles you can read. That
 22 expansion is going to vastly increase the outputs, the
 23 emissions from the plant.

24 It also fails to look at the cumulative air
 25 effects of the facilities in the region. This was

S5-1

S6-1

S6-2

1 touched upon by Mr. Gera earlier.

2 There's 8 other waste coal burning power
3 plants in the region, 5 in the county, 3 in the
4 region. None of these will be considered cumulative
5 impacts because their emissions of considered
6 pollutants are less than 100 tons per year each. so
7 by that logic, there can be 100 facilities located in
8 the same area that have less than, let's say, 99.9
9 tons per year of emissions of each considered
10 pollutant. And none of them will be considered
11 because they're not required to do a cumulative impact
12 study if those requirements are under that level.
13 This is absurd. I'll stick to that.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you, David. Our
16 next speaker is Gary Martin.

17 MR. MARTIN: Thank you. Gary Martin,
18 M-a-r-t-i-n. I'll ask you all to bear with me a
19 little bit. I'm not quite -- these people are pretty
20 good at what they do. My name is Gary Martin. And I
21 have the honor of being the President of the
22 Schuylkill County Building and Construction Trades
23 Council, which is comprised of 15 construction unions
24 in the area. I live in Pottsville. And except for
25 the four years in military service, I've lived here

S6-2

1 all my life.

2 I'm not a scientist or cannot claim to be
3 an expert on any sort of pollution or emissions or
4 water contamination, but I feel that the pros and the
5 cons concerning those matters have been studied pretty
6 thoroughly for the last 10 years by quite a few
7 experts in the private arena as well as state and
8 federal agencies under two different administrations.
9 I don't think this project would have ever gotten this
10 far if it posed much of an environmental threat.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. MARTIN: But I am here to address the
13 job creation that will take place when the project
14 gets off the ground. Hundreds of desperately needed
15 jobs generating a few million man hours will be filled
16 by local workers, local union workers.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Promise?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Build another Wal-Mart.

19 MS. BELL: You know what? Let's let Mr.
20 Martin make his comments, please. Let Mr. Martin
21 finish his comments.

22 MR. MARTIN: To me and to all of us in the
23 building trades, that is the reason we are so
24 passionate and committed in backing this project.
25 These jobs are to be filled by local union

S7-1

1 construction workers. We need these jobs desperately
2 in Schuylkill County.

S7-1

3 I've been in this industry for 30 years.
4 I've been angered, depressed, and disgusted as our
5 local union construction workers have had to travel to
6 other counties and states to work while at the same
7 time a construction project in this county would be
8 built with workers from wherever they could get the
9 cheaper, cheapest wage found. We've had no voice as
10 our local county and state taxes paid wages for
11 construction workers to come here from Alabama, Texas
12 and lastly, Mexico. So that's why we would back this
13 project.

14 We appreciate Mr. Rich's commitment to
15 local labor. This is the first plant of this type to
16 ever be built in America. And by using local union
17 building trades, I can guarantee that this plant will
18 be built on time and with the utmost quality.

19 This is our home also. And unlike most of
20 the gypsies that have been putting up most of the
21 buildings in this county lately, we have reputations
22 to uphold; and we take great pride in what we do.

23 Finally, I want to thank Mr. Rich for his
24 commitment to the building trades and publicly express
25 our appreciation to him and our unwavering support of

1 this project.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. BELL: Our next speaker -- we need to
4 let everyone say their piece. And the court reporter
5 cannot transcribe the comments if other people are
6 speaking while the commenter speaks. And I'd
7 appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Our next
8 speaker is Geronimo Rafter.

9 MR. RAFTER: G-e-r-o-n-i-m-o R-a-f-t-e-r,
10 224 Ohio Avenue, Shenandoah Heights. I'm Indian and
11 Irish. My grandfather was born here 100 years ago.
12 He was a coal miner, died of black lung in his 30s.
13 He got nothing. My father was born here also. He
14 picked slag. He got all the marks on his face, black
15 pits.

16 I was born here, and then we moved to East
17 Falls where Governor Rendell lives. I don't think
18 they'd build it there near his house. So they pick on
19 an area like this where all the creeks and streams are
20 already tainted. The rabbits that I used to see as a
21 kid are gone. The only ones left are the deer.
22 They'll soon be gone, too. I saw it on the
23 reservations where first they took all the memories,
24 raped the lands. Now our homes are at risk because
25 they're building casinos there, which they could never

S8

1 have alcohol in a 35-mile radius for hundreds of years
2 and now they can have alcohol. They found out how to
3 make more money off this. This may be the beginning
4 of the end.

5 On the deeds here, it says we're not
6 entitled to any of the amenities underneath the land.
7 I don't think our house is going to be worth much with
8 all this pollution. I think we'll be paying and
9 paying. And I thought the Bible said the meek shall
10 inherit the earth, but I'm not sure about that.

11 If you really want to know what will
12 happen, ask the Sioux, the Navajo, the Cherokee, the
13 Apache, the Zuni. It didn't say it on their deeds,
14 but it does on ours. I only hope for the best for
15 everybody, both sides. I'm not sure either way. Have
16 a good night.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Rafter. Our next
19 speaker is Jane Etter.

20 MS. ETTER: Thank you. My name is Jane
21 Etter, E-t-t-e-r. I live here in Shenandoah. I'm new
22 to the area. I moved here a few years ago because,
23 well, it was the cheapest place I could find to live
24 and to buy a house. It's a poor area. People here
25 need jobs. I know that. We need to stop depending on

1 foreign oil. I know that. But I don't think -- I
 2 mean, I hadn't planned to speak. I don't know
 3 anything about chemical engineering. I don't know
 4 anything about local politics. But I do know that a
 5 meeting like this makes me wonder, why do we have to
 6 have a meeting like this? Do you know what I mean?
 7 They have to make sure they have covered their back
 8 end here. And so they're letting us have our little
 9 talk.

10 This is a poor area. Do you think for one
 11 minute that this would be happening in a wealthy area,
 12 that they would stand for it, that they would sell
 13 their children and grandchildren out because they so
 14 desperately need a job? I'm not putting down the
 15 people that need a job. I'm poor, too. That's why
 16 I'm here. I wish us all a lot of luck.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. BELL: And our final registered speaker
 19 is Mike Ewall.

20 MR. EWALL: Mike Ewall, E-w-a-l-l. I have
 21 over 50 things I planned to comment on. Obviously,
 22 I'm not going to do that in 5 minutes. But I'll try
 23 to hit several of them. The Draft Environmental
 24 Impact Statement says that without DOE participation,
 25 the proposed project will be cancelled due to

S9-1

1 insufficient funding and may not be demonstrated
2 elsewhere. That's on page 2-19. Yeah, I wish that
3 were true. Unfortunately, there are several projects
4 like this around the country, including Montana and a
5 few other places, where these are actually being
6 proposed and would not involve \$612 million of state
7 and federal subsidies of various sorts. And yes,
8 every penny of this will be subsidized in some way or
9 another.

10 There's also things like comments around
11 two years ago in the scoping period of this asking
12 that the complete chemical composition of all the
13 feedstocks that will be used by this plant be
14 discussed and that mass balance be done for all the
15 metals, halogens, sulfur compounds, radioactive
16 compounds, and other toxic elements that will be going
17 into this facility. That has not been done at all in
18 this document. And it's also not been considered that
19 anything other than anthracite waste coal be processed
20 in this facility yet it's been stated many times on
21 both the news articles and also an application for the
22 \$100 million that you're looking at giving out, that
23 they plan on processing municipal waste, industrial
24 waste, and biomass, which is a wild west category of
25 almost everything else that they can burn or process.

S10-1

S10-2

1 None of those are discussed in this document.

S10-2

2 It also fails, in dash 2 -- 2-7 in this
3 fails to talk about how much waste product will be
4 produced in the beneficiation process. They talk
5 about 4,700 tons per day of culm that will be going
6 into the bin, but that's only the beneficiated coal.
7 They don't talk about full amount because they have a
8 very high ash content around here in the culm. And
9 they can't put the actual culm that's growing in the
10 waste coal piles around here into their refinery.
11 They have to clean it up. So that's also deficient in
12 this document.

S10-3

13 In the water issues, page 3-16 talks about
14 the mine pool water. It totally fails to talk about
15 lead or any other metals that are in the mine pool.
16 There are very high elements of some toxic metals in
17 the mine pool. That's just completely ignored.

S10-4

18 Also, on page 4-16, also on water, they
19 say, "Toxic and carcinogenic substances,
20 including cyanides and polycyclic aromatic
21 hydrocarbons" -- which sounds big, but it causes
22 cancer. That's all you really need to know about
23 it -- "such as pyrene, might be present in low
24 concentrations." But then it says, "Any adverse
25 effects of these substances on Mahanoy Creek water

S10-5

1 quality would probably be undetectable because of the
2 overriding impacts of acid mine drainage." Now,
3 that's some of the worst science I've ever seen. No
4 insult to the folks at Battelle, but acid mine
5 drainage impacts have nothing to do with the toxicity
6 of things that will be going in there. So there are
7 no overriding impacts. There are toxic materials that
8 are going to go into that mine pool, and you're just
9 basically trying to find a way to ignore them.

S10-5

10 On solid waste, there's discrepancies
11 between this document and between the company's own
12 permit application with DEP. There's also
13 discrepancies between their permit applications to
14 DEP. And so I suggest you go back and actually look
15 at those applications and figure out how many tons per
16 day of slag, fine solid waste, and other solid waste
17 that they cannot produce because those numbers don't
18 all match.

S10-6

19 Simpler things like the color of the slag
20 don't even match. And in numerous news articles, they
21 talk about it being brown. This document says it's
22 black. If you can't even figure out what color the
23 stuff's going to be, it really makes me wonder if you
24 know what you're doing.

S10-7

25 Now, there's another discrepancy. Page

S10-8

1 4-31 talks about how the waste coal ash from the
2 Gilberton Power Plant right next door has 0.2 parts
3 per million in mercury yet EPA's data from 1999 when
4 they did information collection across the whole
5 country for mercury that was in coals and waste coals,
6 they found waste anthracite to be 0.19, which is
7 pretty much the same. It's impossible for the ash
8 from having burned that to have the same
9 concentration. It would be far higher. So you're
10 underestimating and trying to make it seem as if there
11 was lower levels of mercury in this waste collection
12 than there really are. And that's also unscientific
13 and inappropriate.

S10-8

14 In the "Alternative" section, you try to
15 define the alternatives far too narrowly. We
16 commented about this two years ago, and you went ahead
17 and ignored our comments on this. You basically went
18 ahead and said, Okay, well, we want to decide whether
19 we're going to give money to a project of this
20 specific type of thing; and therefore, any
21 alternatives we can't look at because it's not the
22 specific type of thing. That's just completely in
23 violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and
24 intentions of looking into alternatives. Am I out of
25 time already?

S10-9

1 MS. PAGNOTTI: Keep going.

2 MR. EWALL: I'm going to speak if there's
3 no one else that wants to speak. I guess I'll come
4 right back. Do you want to ask if there's other --

5 MS. BELL: Yeah, I don't know if there was
6 anyone else that signed up. This lady here wants to
7 speak.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. BELL: Your name, ma'am?

10 MS. OKARMA: Esther Okarma. Esther,
11 E-s-t-h-e-r. Last name Okarma, no apostrophe,
12 O-k-a-r-m-a.

13 Personalities aside, I'm a nurse. I seen
14 many, too many people struggle to die of various
15 pollutant-induced diseases. It is not pleasant. It's
16 not nice. I wish with all my heart and soul that I
17 never have to hear or see of anything like that again.
18 But we don't live in a perfect world. People do have
19 to work.

20 But I have a question. It's all well and
21 good to talk about construction jobs. Construction
22 jobs anywhere last for a finite time. They do not
23 last forever. You live --

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. OKARMA: You live until you take your

1 last breath. If these jobs are going to be
 2 scientific, if they're going to be high paying
 3 technology jobs, whether new information through
 4 chemistry, laboratory work, whatever, you and I both
 5 know there are not many people in this room who are
 6 qualified to fill that type job. Are people going to
 7 be trained from this area to hold down that type high
 8 paying job?

S11-1

9 And it came to my attention in the
 10 newspaper, the advertisement in Monday's newspaper
 11 concerning this meeting was fine. Then in a
 12 subsequent issue of the Republican and Herald, on page
 13 8, there is a notice of public hearing --

14 MS. BELL: I'm sorry. What's the date?

15 MS. OKARMA: -- for Schuylkill County
 16 comprehensive plan, open space and greenway plan.
 17 This has to do with eminent domain. I'm also
 18 concerned with, I think it was David Houck's comments
 19 concerning the longevity of this plant, the extension
 20 into how many years hence the plant will be lived and
 21 will be operating.

22 In conjunction with this eminent domain,
 23 underneath Shenandoah, running from Shenandoah
 24 through, I think through Maizeville and maybe even
 25 through Frackville is what is known as the mammoth

1 vein. There are many homes built on top of this
2 mammoth vein. This is a very famous entity in this
3 anthracite, anthracite mining community. And I'm just
4 wondering if there isn't some sort of connection, a
5 correlation between this proposed open space and
6 greenway plan and a future use of the coals that are
7 in this mammoth vein. Thank you very much.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. BELL: Thank you. Is there anyone
10 else? That's all the speakers. Okay. This
11 gentleman. Your name, sir?

12 MR. SCHULTZ: Lou Schultz.

13 MS. BELL: Lou Schultz.

14 MR. SCHULTZ: Louis Schultz, S-c-h-u-l-t-z.
15 Louis, L-o-u-i-s. I'm not a doctor or anything like
16 that, right? I don't know where you come from. I
17 don't care. But I'll tell you what. I live close to
18 that cogen plant, probably closer than anybody in
19 here. I'll tell you right now I have had no problems.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. SCHULTZ: Okay? I'm not up here to
22 make a fool out of these people or anybody else. I
23 know some of them. I know this man over here. I
24 voted for him in his election. He's the mayor of our
25 town. And in my opinion, he's a good man.

S12

1 Everybody's going to have concerns about this.

2 I'd like a raise of hands on this. How
3 many people in here brush their teeth? Raise your
4 hand. Okay. How many people in here use underarm
5 deodorant/antiperspirant? Come on. Raise your hand.
6 Okay. How many people drove here tonight in an
7 automobile? All right. Well, then we all should be
8 concerned about pollution.

9 You're probably wondering what the hell is
10 this about.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Are they not necessities?

12 MS. BELL: Okay. We need to let the --

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I apologize. I
14 apologize.

15 MR. SCHULTZ: I listened to the negatives,
16 and I listened to one positive in there. I'm up here
17 to represent the union trades. Okay? I work for the
18 union trades. I need work like everybody else. I'm
19 not retired yet.

20 Underarm deodorant contains aluminum
21 chlorohydrate and aluminum oxides. It's a pollutant.
22 You put it right on your underarms. Fluoride,
23 chlorine in your drinking water, fluoride in your
24 toothpaste. You know, we're polluting ourselves at
25 home in our bathrooms every morning. If you don't

1 like the smell of sulfur, then don't stay in the
2 bathroom when you go to the commode. You're going to
3 smell the same thing.

4 We need jobs. We're not retired. We need
5 work in this area. This industry went down the drain
6 because of people that were afraid. I hear it all the
7 time. I work out in Indiana. I've been working out
8 in Indiana now since September. I live in Gilberton.
9 That's a 5-hour drive from here, Indiana,
10 Pennsylvania. I'd like to stay home here and work. I
11 know a lot of guys in the union trades that live in
12 their hometown, operating engineers, iron workers, all
13 kinds of, all kinds of guys, the millwrights. I'm a
14 millwright. I get work at the cogen plant off and on
15 when a turbine goes down up there. I'm looking, I'm
16 looking for some work here. There's enough negatives
17 in this room, but I'd like to hear some more
18 positives.

19 And I worked for the Riches probably, all
20 in all -- I'm going to guess on this one -- I'm
21 probably going to say close to 10 years. I've lived
22 in the anthracite region all my life. I don't have
23 emphysema. My father was a coal miner. He took care
24 of himself and protected himself, and he never got
25 emphysema. My father worked for Jack Rich for

1 35 years. He worked in the Draper Mine until 1935
2 until the explosion. And then old Mr. Rich -- a lot
3 of you might not even know that man. We always called
4 him Grandfather -- he gave my father a job. And he
5 said, You work for me, you'll work there for the rest
6 of your life. And he did. When my father retired, he
7 was making \$2.64 an hour.

8 Our union scale is pretty good right now.
9 We have good jobs. We could use, we could use a
10 better health care plan, though. That sucks. But
11 what I'm trying to say is let's weigh all these facts.
12 There's a good showup of people here tonight.
13 Everybody's concerned. But let's not browbeat this
14 thing into the ground before we give it a chance to
15 grow. If this man's going to do this, he's going to
16 do this project, I'm sure he took into consideration
17 air and water.

18 Let me tell you, I live right where it's
19 at. I see what they're doing with the fly ash. The
20 fly ash goes on the ground. They level it out. They
21 put somewhere between 16, maybe 24 inches of clay on
22 top of it, good clay. And they put hydrolime on it,
23 and they plant it. And I'll tell you what. I've
24 never seen so many deer and turkey in my life and
25 rabbits, a lot of game. You don't know where the

1 rabbits are at? Come down to my house. Lots of them.
2 Lots of deer.

3 So there's nothing going on in the
4 Gilberton valley that I can say is polluting anything.
5 If you want to get into pollution, start checking the
6 stuff you're using in your house. Start there. And
7 that's -- remember -- here's another thing, too, you
8 should look at: The food we're eating. And I'm not
9 sticking up for the government because I'll tell you
10 what, I can stand here till next Christmas talking
11 about what I think about the government. But just
12 check yourself out, make sure we're not going to do
13 this thing in before this gets started.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. BELL: Is there anybody else? Anyone
16 else like to speak this evening? Okay. The gentleman
17 in the green. Your name, sir?

18 MR. MAHMUD: My name is Allan, two L's,
19 a-n, Mahmud, M-a-h-m-o-d. I am definitely not a
20 public speaker. I did not -- I do not know the ins
21 and outs of this whole program. I do not -- number
22 one, what are you going to do without the food you
23 eat? What are you going to do without the
24 antiperspirant you need to use, the toothpaste you
25 need to use? Is there something else I can use? I

S13

1 would love to hear it. Are there artificial, anything
2 else artificial I can eat that I can avoid eating the
3 food at the market?

4 Another thing, Jack Rich -- now, tell me if
5 I'm wrong. Everybody I talk to, they all tell me the
6 same thing. You're so worried about employment and a
7 job for you and a job for you and a job for you.
8 You're so worried about the employment. One of the,
9 one of the big companies that put a building up on
10 901, everybody's excited about it. But what are they
11 getting, \$10 million to begin with. Why didn't they
12 not start at \$10 an hour or \$11 an hour? I believe,
13 from what I understand, \$8 because he wouldn't leave
14 them, because Jack Rich stepped in and said no, that
15 they can't offer \$10 an hour. It was the minimum.
16 You began at \$10. And because Mr. Rich steps in and
17 says no, they had to lower the wage.

18 Lastly, as far as what he's doing with the
19 product, that he's not polluting the area, if you
20 happen to drive near Hills Terrace or Yatesville
21 coming from Brandonville to Mahanoy City, I believe
22 there's a stench that if you drive slow enough, you
23 can see "Rich" written across it. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. BELL: Okay. We appreciate all of your

1 comments. We need to keep the comments to the Draft
2 Environmental Impact Statement. That's what is
3 critical to DOE.

4 I'd like now, if nobody else has anything
5 to say, I need to go back to our initial group of
6 speakers. Okay. I'm sorry. This gentleman in the
7 blue. And then we're going to go to Mr. Pautienus and
8 Mr. Gera, okay, and Sharon Chiao. Your name, sir?

9 MR. YODIS: Ronald Yodis, Y-o-d-i-s.
10 Ladies and gentlemen, I've been a resident of the area
11 off and on for 69 years, 69 years. When I first was
12 born here, there was 29,000 people here in this town.
13 I graduated from a class of 175 students. I can't
14 find 4 or 5 of them.

15 I used to work for a popular frozen food
16 plant in the area, and I used to test the water. So I
17 took the test kit home, and I tested my water at my
18 well, at my sink. And all you need is 0.5 parts per
19 million of free chlorine to have all the germs in the
20 water killed. When I tested my water at home, it was
21 as carte blanche as I am. Don't take my word for it.
22 Go and get a test kit for yourself.

23 We're in Schuylkill County. Money talks;
24 BS walks. After 33 years of loyal service, I was
25 thrown out like a bag of garbage from a man that I

S14

1 believed and promised me a job for as long as it took
2 him to become successful. Well, he became successful;
3 and I've been out of work since I was 59 years old.
4 And I've suffered 6 nervous breakdowns because of it.
5 I didn't know where to go.

6 Our tax dollars paid for the Alaskan
7 Pipeline. Where is that oil going? Southeast Asia.
8 Why? Because they get more money for it there. Why
9 do we export any of our oil? Why? Because there's
10 more money in it. Why does a ton of coal, I'm told,
11 cost \$140 or more? Is there a shortage of coal? I
12 don't think so.

13 Like I said before, I sympathize with all
14 of you people. But you're not going to get anywhere.
15 Like I told you before, money speaks louder than
16 words. And you can be as honest as Jesus Christ, and
17 look what they did to him. I rest my case.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. BELL: Okay. We're going to return to
20 Mr. Pautienus, unless there's someone else. Okay.
21 Mr. Pautienus, we're going to give you 3 minutes.

22 (A discussion was held off the record.)

23 MS. BELL: Okay. I'm going to ask that,
24 Mr. Pautienus, just ask in the next round that you
25 keep your comments to the Draft EIS and to the project

1 and specifically the environmental impacts.

2 MR. PAUTIENUS: Okay. Excuse me. You
3 people that are leaving, kindly leave quietly. I have
4 4 pages on mercury, and I can't talk to you on
5 mercury in -- please, if you have something to say,
6 come up here and say it. If not, please keep quiet.
7 Respect what I have to say. You may not agree with
8 me, but I have an opinion. And I hope my time is not
9 ticking away because you people can't keep quiet.

10 MS. BELL: No, we didn't start your clock.

11 MR. PAUTIENUS: Okay. Don't start my clock
12 till everybody is quiet and all the coal gasification
13 people leave the place. Okay. What I want to talk
14 about is this: Mercury. What if it should
15 happen -- maybe we ought to close the doors first.

16 MR. MARKEL: Sir, the point is you're
17 talking to us.

18 MR. PAUTIENUS: But I can't hear with all
19 the noise out there. What I would like to talk about
20 is mercury. And what I think should happen is -- I
21 have a scientific background. So I would like to look
22 at this mercury issue scientifically. I would like to
23 take 50 people from the Morea Correctional
24 Institution, 50 people from Frackville Correctional
25 Institution, and 50 people from the Federal

1 Institution in Minersville and test their hair. This
 2 is where -- and I -- we need 150 people from the
 3 surrounding communities of Frackville, Morea,
 4 Gilberton, Mahanoy City, Barnesville. We need 150
 5 people from those areas. Now, what you do is you go
 6 in and take a hair sample, take a hair sample from
 7 each person and record who they are and where they're
 8 located. And trust me, you're going to find people
 9 who are currently infected with mercury in our area.

} S15-1

10 For you women in this area, I just want to
 11 tell you one thing. If you're experiencing lack of
 12 sex drive and having problems with your pre, with your
 13 menstrual period, believe me, it could be from them
 14 small pieces of mercury that are coming out of the 7
 15 cogeneration plants around where we live right now.
 16 It affects your progesterone, your sex hormone. If
 17 you women, especially those living very close to the
 18 cogeneration plants right now, are experiencing any of
 19 this, go in and have your hair tested. See if you're
 20 going to show up positive on the mercury scale.
 21 Mercury, once you get it into your body, is bio
 22 cumulative. So if you're showing mercury in your
 23 hair -- and I think there should be money put aside to
 24 do this test. It's a very simple test -- and then
 25 people who are found positive with mercury in their

1 hair, you test their urine, you test their blood. And
2 you find out -- here's a study and a sample from 150
3 people who have been confined where they allege there
4 was a coal system and they never get polluted.
5 Believe me, you don't need a gas chamber in
6 Pennsylvania, as I said before. You just send the
7 prisoners to Morea or Frackville or Minersville. And
8 after a while, you won't have to worry about them.
9 They'll become asthmatic; they'll become sick.
10 They'll kick the bucket. They're off the tax bill.

11 People, I don't want to sound like an
12 alarmist. But I lived in this area for a long time.
13 And I'm just sick and tired of everybody crapping on
14 us because we're a bunch of yahoos just getting off
15 the boat. Believe me, our incomes might be not as low
16 as our IQs. I can debate any one of these people that
17 they want to put forward up item for item, section for
18 section.

19 The air you're breathing, believe me -- let
20 me tell you one thing. Interstate 81 is a tragedy.
21 What I would like them to do is move the air quality,
22 air quality station they have right now here in
23 Shenandoah School District and put it up on 81. And
24 you know what? The meters will go off the scale.
25 They won't even be able -- when the inversion layer

S15-2

1 comes in as it was on Wednesday night, the meters
2 won't even measure it. They'll be off of the scale.
3 What's happening is you're being bombarded with
4 pollutants from the 7 cogeneration plants right now
5 that you may not know.

6 And I have to give up my time because
7 Janice has been very kind in letting me speak again,
8 and there's other people who want to talk. But I tell
9 you what, anybody who wants to stay after the official
10 meeting, I'll give you another hour of all of this
11 stuff to take home with you that you can rely on and
12 say Ed Pautienus -- I'll guarantee you when and if
13 this plant is built, you would say, Pautienus, you
14 were right. Thank you for your time.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. BELL: Thank you. Just a reminder,
17 anything that you didn't cover in your verbal
18 comments, if you write them down on those yellow cards
19 and submit them, they'll be part of the comment and
20 response process. The next person is John Gera.

21 MR. PAUTIENUS: One other thing. Anybody
22 wants this nice cartoon work about how we're getting
23 gas in the area, come up. I'll give you a copy. You
24 can circulate it and make copies and put it around the
25 area.

1 MR. GERA: I'd just like to add a few
2 comments to what he said about mercury. If I had a
3 thermometer in my hand and I dropped it and it broke,
4 I'm sure everyone in here would have to be taken out
5 and showered and the place would be condemned or
6 cleaned up and HAZMAT would be here because of one
7 thermometer. But these plants are producing high
8 amounts of mercury, and the government's allowing it.
9 Some here are fighting for jobs, but I'm here fighting
10 for a good life. Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. BELL: Thank you, John. Sharon Chiao
13 would like to speak again. And then the gentleman in
14 the back, did you want to talk? Okay. After Sharon,
15 you can come down.

16 MS. CHIAO: I would just like to continue
17 where I left off. The gentleman from Gilberton who
18 spoke about living close to a cogen plant, I know
19 people in this room here that I think live pretty
20 close to a cogen plant in Morea. And I can tell you
21 of how many of them that have had respiratory
22 problems, sinus infections, and asthmatic children.
23 So there is a difference.

24 And I would like to add, that gentleman
25 from Gilberton, what is the value of his home in

S16-1

1 Gilberton? And the values of the homes aren't going
2 to be worth hardly anything when this comes in.

} S17-1

3 My husband was a union man for 33 years. I
4 would never get up here and speak against the union.
5 I agree they need jobs. But if you're going to work
6 in Mahanoy Township, come live in Mahanoy Township.
7 We'd love to have you.

8 I would like to talk about the noise. In
9 the Impact Statement, it says it would probably not be
10 a problem, not that it won't but that it probably
11 won't be a problem because of the distance of the
12 prison and the project site and their planned noise
13 measurements, the natural and manmade terrain and all
14 these things. And it says because it is a sealed
15 prison. It is not a sealed prison. Anyone who has
16 went on a tour of that prison realizes that prison is
17 made up of concrete sections. And the prisoners have
18 to walk from one concrete unit to another, to the
19 cafeteria, to the chapel, to the unit; and they are
20 not inside a unit all day. They are exposed to that
21 air and so are the 570 people who work at that plant.

} S17-2
} S17-3

22 And what about the citizens of Morea?
23 They're going to be very, very close to this. They
24 already are contending with the cogen plant, 5 cogen
25 plants. The air is already compromised. why would we

1 want to add something more to it? What about the
2 citizens of Morea and the Morea Community Park where
3 the Little League comes up to play and to park? How
4 much noise and odor will they receive from this
5 project?

S17-4

6 And also, I would say that this is being
7 built in the fog capital of Pennsylvania. There will
8 be 6 stacks on this plant. One stack will be 300 feet
9 tall. The other 5 stacks will be 200 feet tall,
10 throwing more emissions into the air and into the fog
11 area. They're -- in nowhere in this book is there any
12 stats on the number of accidents in the fog area
13 between Pine Grove and Hazleton. Nowhere in this book
14 is listed the number of fatalities that we have every
15 year in that fog area. And now they want to add more
16 emissions to that fog area, but they said that's okay.
17 We'll put flashing lights up on the highway. That
18 makes no sense.

S17-5

19 And the fact that there were no other sites
20 seriously considered for this is a puzzle. I don't
21 want to see Mahanoy Township become a Centralia, and I
22 don't want to be gassed. Please consider the safety
23 of the ordinary citizens.

S17-6

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. CHIAO: Do you have any more impact

1 statements?

2 MS. BELL: We do have a few, and we're
3 taking addresses. So I can mail the rest out.

4 MR. ARCURI: Joe Arcuri, A-r-c-u-r-i, 1200
5 West Pine Street, Frackville. I wish to convey the
6 message that I am not an affiliate of any
7 environmental group and that I am speaking here on my
8 own behalf. And my gravest concern is the good, the
9 bad, and the ugly relative to mercury toxicity which
10 at this very moment is causing a silent brain damage
11 epidemic amongst our nation's youth and children and
12 pets.

13 Let me begin with the bad. It is a known
14 fact that the EPA is finding that their own
15 recommended safety levels to control mercury emissions
16 are much too high and are actually unsafe. And
17 because of these high safety parameters, air
18 monitoring stations are not registering toxic air
19 emissions within safe limits.

20 Studies show that women exposed to these
21 supposedly safe levels of mercury during pregnancy
22 have children born with autism, learning difficulties,
23 poor memory, and ADHD, better known as attention
24 deficit hyperactivity disorder.

25 An article in the wall street

S18-1

1 Journal -- this is the Wall Street Journal. No
2 bullshit -- goes on to state that we expect mercury
3 toxicity to rapidly increase because the main source
4 of contamination is coal and waste coal burning power
5 plants. And regardless of which political party, this
6 is no longer a national but a global problem since
7 50 percent of our mercury pollution comes from China
8 and other developing nations, which rains all over the
9 United States as we shuttle our manufacturing to their
10 coal power plants which fuel the factories
11 overproducing American goods.

12 The article also goes on to say that babies
13 are subjected to unprecedented pollution even before
14 birth and then it progresses nonstop after birth. No
15 wonder cancer and leukemia, once rare in children, has
16 escalated to be the number one illness to kill kids
17 ages one to 15. The evidence is now overwhelming that
18 the parents' burden of pollutants are the major cause
19 of their children's birth defects as well as
20 subsequent illnesses years later from allergies,
21 autism, ADHD to cancer.

22 China, because of its cheap labor, has
23 become the surrogate for our heavily polluting
24 factories for the overproduction of American goods.
25 The problem is it is growing so fast and immense, it

1 has to increase its need for the production of more
2 electricity. This is provided by burning more coal
3 and is adding immensely to the toxic worldwide mercury
4 burden.

5 Even Harvard University scientists have
6 claimed that the mercury spewed forth from these power
7 companies is taken up into the clouds to rain out over
8 the United States. And collectively, we have so
9 polluted our oceans that even the breast milk of
10 pristine Eskimo women in the arctic whose main food
11 staple is seafood is toxic with mercury.

12 In China, mercury pollution is rising at
13 such a fast rate that there are whole towns where
14 folks suffer from mysterious neurological symptoms
15 that have been traced to insidious mercury poisoning.

16 Lenient government regulations have allowed
17 Chinese power plants to pay small fees for the
18 privilege of polluting and not having to use expensive
19 air scrubbers on their smokestacks. This saves them
20 millions of dollars. Meanwhile, grain from nearby
21 fields have over 40 times as much mercury as grain
22 from less contaminated areas.

23 In the meantime, back in the states, the
24 Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
25 allows Gilberton Power Company to pollute as long as

1 they promptly pay their Title 5 air emission fees,
2 which from 1996 to 2002 totalled approximately
3 \$323,354. That's a lot of money to pay for regulated
4 pollutants. And we didn't factor in the years from
5 1988 to 1995 and 2003 to 2005. It must be close to a
6 million dollars.

7 In 1999, three medical doctors, Dr. William
8 Rhea, the foremost clinical ecologist in the world, to
9 whom most doctors send their failures today, and Dr.
10 Theron Randolph, the father of chemical sensitivity,
11 and Dr. Sherry A. Rogers, a diplomate of the American
12 Board of Family Practice, a fellow of the American
13 College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, and a
14 diplomate of the American Academy of Environmental
15 Medicine, lectured for 3 weeks in 6 cities in China.
16 They saw firsthand how these people live, work, and
17 eat in these polluted areas. These poor people don't
18 have a clue why they are so desperately ill with
19 symptoms rendering drugs powerless or why their
20 children are suffering brain loss or mysteriously
21 dying of cancer and leukemia. In some areas, only
22 putrid dark smoke and black streams color the once
23 pristine landscape. They have no escape.

24 This conveyor belt of bad air dumping on
25 the United States will continue to compound hidden

1 mercury levels; and it is slated to rise dramatically
2 thanks to mining, incineration, and electricity
3 generation from waste coal burning.

4 I'm almost finished. This finding of
5 exploding mercury toxicity reported in the very first
6 column of the front page of the Wall Street Journal
7 should be a blatant warning to the field of medicine.
8 In January of 2005, the EPA released research
9 indicating nearly a million babies born in the United
10 states between 1999 and 2000 had unsafe levels of
11 mercury in their blood. Is this what you want for
12 Schuylkill County and its 37 fresh drinking water
13 reservoirs?

14 Over the past decade, safe levels of toxic
15 heavy metals are eventually found to be too high and
16 actually unsafe. And if you think heavy metal
17 toxicity doesn't affect you now, just wait. It will
18 eventually affect us all. And the increased
19 vulnerability of infants and children means the
20 intellect of our future generations is in great
21 jeopardy. All the medical care and drugs in the world
22 are powerless to cure this anathema.

23 That was the bad. Now comes the ugly. As
24 far as the adult world goes, this will knock 10 to
25 15 years off your life span. But then again, you got

1 to die from something.

2 I saved the good part for last; and that is
3 there will be more jobs, but you will be too sick to
4 work. The other good from all this is you'll get to
5 meet your maker sooner.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. BELL: Okay. Yes, Mr. Rafter.

8 MR. RAFTER: I just remembered that about
9 three years ago, I was at a township meeting up in
10 West Mahanoy Township. This lady was one of the
11 supervisors there. And my wife was from Europe. And
12 she used to wipe her head every night with a cotton
13 thing and showed me how black it was. And she was
14 awful surprised about how we pollute the whole world,
15 not just here. USA is the biggest polluter of all.

16 And if the DEP wants to check out where all
17 that white fly ash is coming, just come up to my
18 house. Three clothes lines rotted from it. And I can
19 go like this, and you'll see lots of it come flying
20 off. The brass doors are discolored from it. My
21 wife's dying in Europe from breast cancer; and she
22 swears it's from here, Schuylkill County. And she was
23 surprised at the amount of people that had cancer up
24 in this area and wanted to know why is all cancer part
25 of her.

1 5:00 a.m. this morning, I was walking to
 2 church from the Heights, to the Annunciation down in
 3 Shenandoah. And I looked in the sky. Up near the
 4 Heights, the sky was full of stars. Where the cogen
 5 plant is, a dark cloud, no star, not one single star
 6 in the sky. And if they're saying there is no fly ash
 7 in Gilberton, go up the Heights. There's plenty of
 8 it. And I invite you from DEP or whoever they are,
 9 come up there. I can scrape it off of my fence, off
 10 of the deck. And the three clothes lines got enough,
 11 if I went like this, it would hit that guy in the
 12 front row. That's how much fly ash. They're sitting
 13 up there. I invite you up there. They've been there
 14 for maybe a year now. I'm sure it's still on there.
 15 I'll go like this. You sit there, and I'll hit you
 16 with it. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. BELL: I think that's the end of our
 19 registered speakers. I just wanted to recap on what
 20 we're going, what happens next in the process. We're
 21 going to have another hearing tomorrow night in
 22 Pottsville. Some of the same speakers will be
 23 participating, and we're probably going to have some
 24 new ones as well.

25 At the same time and until February 8th of

S19-1

1 2006, federal, state, local agencies and citizens are
2 able to review and comment on the document. We'll
3 take any comments as long as they're postmarked by
4 February 8th. DOE will then take and consider each
5 comment, and we have to respond to each comment that
6 was presented to us in the final EIS. And then a
7 record of decision is developed, and that is signed by
8 our assistant secretary for fossil energy.

9 If I can remind you again, the due date for
10 the comments is February 8th. You can mail them to
11 me, fax them to me, or leave a message on the
12 toll-free number that's available. And you can get
13 them on the comment cards that are out in the hall.
14 If you didn't feel comfortable talking this evening
15 but you want to write more comments down, there are
16 plenty of comment cards out in the lobby and there are
17 self-addressed envelopes to me. If you just put your
18 comments in the envelope and put them in the mail, we
19 will include them in the proceedings.

20 Okay. And finally, I need to let the
21 record show that this meeting ended at 8:45. And with
22 that, we are adjourned. Thank you for your
23 participation.

24 (The proceedings concluded at 8:45 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately to the best of my ability in the notes taken by me during the hearing of the foregoing cause and that this copy is a correct transcript of the same.

Jennifer P. McGrath, RPR
Official Court Reporter

Responses to Comments from the
January 9, 2006, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, Public Hearing on the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed
Gilberton Coal-to-Clear Fuels Project

NOTE: For the purpose of coding comments and ease of cross-referencing between documents and other comments, the Shenandoah transcript has been coded as S_-. The first number identifies the chronological order of the speaker. The second number, if used, identifies the chronological order of the speaker's comments.

Comment S1-1:

There are so many conflicting reports where this plant is going to be located. When I read, when I read the approved air emissions programs from DEP in Wilkes-Barre, the plant is in two townships, Mahanoy Township and West Mahanoy Township. There's a big difference in where the plant is going to be location, located. If it's located in West Mahanoy Township, they're no longer in the KOZ zone. If they're located in Mahanoy Township, they're located in a KOZ zone. In a KOZ zone, they pay nothing. For 10 years, it's a freebee. No income tax, no sales tax, no tax.

Response:

The proposed facilities would be located in Mahanoy Township in one of Pennsylvania's designated Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ). KOZs are geographical areas that receive local and state approval for tax abatements for the purpose of stimulating economic development. Because of this designation, local real estate taxes (to Schuylkill County, Mahanoy Township, and the Mahanoy Area School District) for the proposed project site and taxable improvements would not be due until 10 years after project construction is complete. To provide an example of the future tax revenues that could be generated, assuming 2003 real estate tax rates and a projected assessed value on land and improvements, the facilities' annual real estate tax payments would be approximately \$73,000 starting 10 years after project construction.

Comment S2-1:

I can't understand why there's so many comments in this impact statement such as maybe, if, likely, could be, possibly. Give us some definites. Tell us what's going to happen to us.

Response:

The EIS has been prepared in compliance with NEPA, which ensures that early consideration is given to environmental impacts in federal planning and decision making. Prior to completion of the NEPA process, any actions taken by DOE with regard to the proposed project are not considered final decisions. No project action or activities, including detailed design and construction, are allowed that would have an adverse environmental impact or limit the choice of alternatives. Because of NEPA's early involvement during the preliminary design stage of the proposed WMPI project, many details have not yet been finalized and evaluation of potential impacts is less definitive. As a result, many of the EIS analyses use conservative estimates that form an upper bound of predicted impacts.

Comment S2-2:

And I wondered why there's so many specs in that impact statement concerning Pottsville. This plant is not being built in Pottsville. And Pottsville's name is repeated in the article so many times. This is being built in Mahanoy Township.

Response:

The EIS contains data on the social and economic resources most likely to be affected by construction and operation of the proposed facilities. Data are included for the city of Pottsville because it is the largest city in Schuylkill County and would likely be the destination of any workers relocating to the area for project construction or operations. However, most of the social and economic data in the EIS are for Schuylkill County, and data for Mahanoy and West Mahanoy townships and Frackville and Gilberton boroughs are provided where available.

Comment S2-3:

In the one section of the impact statement, it says that sulfur dioxide will pose no problems. Toward the back of the impact statement, it says that the plant averaged three complaints a month about the rotten-egg odor from the hydrogen sulfate which occurs at the plant's lowest emission. So even at its lowest emission, there will be odor.

Response:

There were no records identified regarding odor complaints for the existing Gilberton Power Plant. However, in Section 4.1.2.2, Operation, Scoping Concerns, a comparison was made between the proposed facility's state-of-the-art technology and a slightly different technological process used at Sasol's coal-to-oil facilities located in Secunda, South Africa. It was Sasol's Secunda facilities that were noted to have experienced about 3 odor complaints per month, over the last year, not the Gilberton Power Plant.

Odors from the proposed facilities should not be perceptible due to the difference in technologies i.e., Sasol's coal-to-oil facilities and WMPI's integrated F-T process and gasification facilities, which include synthesis gas cleanup equipment.

Comment S2-4:

On page 4-34 of the impact statement, it says that during the construction of these proposed facilities, that potential health impacts to the public could result from fugitive dust emissions into the atmosphere; however, these impacts will only last a short time.

How long does it take to hurt a person's health? We're not concerned with a short time or a long time. We don't want a health hazard for our health. And I will firmly state that all of my concerns are for the health and safety of the township where I live and serve.

Response:

On April 29, 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection installed a PM-10 monitor at the Mahanoy State Correctional Institute, near maintenance buildings on the east end of the prison. The sampler began running on May 9, 2006, on a 6-day cycle (i.e., operating for one 24-hour period every sixth day). If the monitor indicates that the PM-10 ambient air quality standard is being exceeded during construction, WMPI

has agreed to lessen the intensity of the heavy earthwork to prevent future exceedances, when the wind is blowing toward the prison. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection also installed high-volume particulate samplers that began running on May 9, 2006, to measure ambient concentrations of metals (i.e., arsenic, cadmium, chrome, nickel, and lead) and total suspended particles at the Mahanoy State Correctional Institution, the Mahanoy City Sewage Treatment Plant, and the Frackville State Correctional Institution.

Comment S2-5:

And then there's the issue of the prisoners. This project will be 2,600 feet west of the Mahanoy State Correctional Institute. There are 2,200 inmates there and 570 employees. In case of emergency, how do you relocate this large number of inmates safely? This is a maximum security prison.

Response:

While no credible emergencies have been identified at this time that would require the rapid emergency evacuation of the prison, this type of event could be identified in the preparation of the Risk Management Plan and the Emergency Response Program, as described in the revised Section 4.1.9.1. Should the need for rapid evacuation of the prison be identified in the Risk Management Plan, the necessary procedures and safeguards would be developed to protect public health and safety in accordance with 40 CFR 68. Revised Section 4.1.7.5 notes that the Schuylkill County Emergency Management Agency (SCEMA) would be responsible for evacuating nearby residents, in necessary. SCEMA, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, is in the process of developing a hazard mitigation plan for Schuylkill County.

In addition, an emergency operations plan for Mahanoy State Correctional Institute that includes procedures for evacuation of inmates and employees in the event of an emergency has been developed (Major Dennis Durant, Chief of Security, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, e-mail to Cheri Bandy Foust, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, March 15, 2006). The evacuation of approximately 2,300 inmates would be accomplished by exercising agreements with bus services in the area, which are in place. Logistical considerations with other prisons for relocating inmates would require approximately 24 hours. The movement of inmates would require an additional 24 to 48 hours (Ed Martin, Superintendent's Assistant, Mahanoy State Correctional Institution, personal communication to Robert Miller, ORNL, March 16, 2006).

Comment S2-6:

More importantly, how do you bus our children from nearby Mahanoy Area District and their teaching staff to a safe facility in case of an accident or an explosion?

Response:

The revised Section 4.1.9.1 describes more clearly the development of a Risk Management Plan and an Emergency Response Program, which is not complete, that must be submitted to the EPA prior to plant operations. The safeguards and procedures for the protection of the public health from potential accidents are to be addressed in this plan as part of compliance with 40 CFR 68. Section 7.1 describes the hazard assessment that is part of the Risk Management plan, including an analysis of the effects of a worst case accident scenario on offsite populations.

In addition, an emergency operations plan for evacuating students and staff in the event of an emergency has been developed that includes procedures which are in place (Anthony Crimaldi, Superintendent, Mahanoy Area School District, e-mail to Cheri Bandy Foust, ORNL, April 18, 2006).

Comment S3-1A:

Short list of area pollution: Home heating - oil burners, coal, wood stoves; fly ash used as antiskid for roads and landfill which gets into the air and water; biosolids and dredge; pesticides; Centralia mine fire; Interstate 81 - dump trucks, cars, idling trucks at the new warehouse sites being loaded and unloaded; foundries - Goulds Pumps, Ashland; Quirin Foundry, St. Clair; Alcoa, and so on; active and old landfills - Pine Grove, Frackville, Shenandoah; sewage plants; red rivers and streams; acid water/acid rain; prisons; pollution from the government's superfund cleanup sites; 7 or 8 cogeneration plants in this area; Rich's company polluting drinking water wells in a large area in Frackville.

Response:

Cumulative impacts of the proposed project, in combination with other facilities, operations, and activities are discussed in Section 6.

Comment S3-1B:

It will cost more to make this fuel than they can sell it for. So this means the taxpayer will subsidize the difference. The taxpayer will help to pay for building this project and get no benefit in return.

Response:

As stated in Section 2.2, Congress established the CCPI Program with a specific goal—to accelerate commercial deployment of advanced coal-based technologies that can generate clean, reliable, and affordable electricity in the United States. Congress directed DOE to pursue this goal by providing partial funding for projects owned and controlled by non-federal-government participants. Thus, while it is true that the proposed facilities would be partially funded using taxpayer dollars, it is also true that the potential benefits of the proposed facilities (a cleaner, more reliable and affordable source of electricity and jobs and income for the project region) would benefit taxpayers.

Comment S3-1C:

The public will be harmed by this project from all the types of pollution coming from this project.

Response:

Based on the analyses presented in this EIS, DOE does not believe that the public would be harmed from the construction and operation of the proposed project.

Comment S3-1D:

And if this becomes another government superfund cleanup site, the taxpayer will pay to clean up the site.

Response:

The comment has been noted. DOE has no reason to believe the project will become a superfund site.

Comment S3-2:

Questions for the Department of Energy, DOE: Why should a hundred million dollar grant be given for old obsolete technology? Why is the DOE funding fossil fuel research?

Response:

As noted in the EIS, the CCPI Program is open to any technology advancement related to coal-based power generation that results in efficiency, environmental, and economic improvement compared to currently available state-of-the-art alternatives. While the individual technologies that make up this proposed project have been independently operated, this project would demonstrate the integration of the technologies. A successful demonstration would indicate that the performance and cost targets for the integrated technologies are achievable at the commercial scale.

Comment S3-3:

Did the DOE add in their study all the other polluters in this area? Did the DOE add in their study all the pollution already in this area like in my list given before? Did the DOE add in their study the 7 or 8 cogeneration plants?

Response:

The EIS air quality analysis has been augmented to include an air dispersion modeling evaluation of the potential cumulative impacts resulting from the simultaneous operation of the proposed facilities with 6 existing power plants located within approximately 20 miles of the proposed facilities. The existing power plants included were Gilberton, Schuylkill, Wheelabrator, Northeastern, Mt. Carmel, and Panther Creek. Other existing emissions have been incorporated by adding background concentrations from air monitoring data to the cumulative ambient concentrations predicted for the power plants. The results of this analysis have been added to Section 6.1.1.

Comment S3-4:

Did the DOE study the impact the weather, cloud cover, fog and climate in this area will have on this project?

Response:

Yes. Section 3.2.1 discusses the existing climate in the vicinity of the proposed site. The air dispersion modeling used a full range of 54 potential meteorological conditions (i.e., conditions representing different combinations of atmospheric stabilities and wind speeds).

Comment S3-5:

Did the DOE study the high numbers of illnesses in this area because of pollution like the high rate of cancer, asthma, heart disease?

Response:

Potential effects of the proposed project on human health and safety are discussed in Sections 3.9.1 and 4.1.9.

Comment S3-6:

Did the DOE study what effects an accident such as explosion, fire, or release of deadly gasses at this project will have on the hundreds of prisoners locked in their cells, the prison guards and workers at the state prison just a few feet from this project?

Response:

DOE has not conducted a study to identify and analyze hazards and accidents. However, as discussed in the revised Sect. 4.1.9.1, hazards and accidents (including explosions and releases of H₂S and SO₂) would be identified and analyzed as part of the preparation of a Risk Management Plan that is to include an Emergency Response Program for the facility. This plan must be submitted to the EPA prior to operation of the facility. Also, see response to Comment S2-5.

Comment S3-7:

How and where will the byproducts and waste material from this project be disposed of?

Response:

To the extent possible, byproducts and wastes would be sold commercially. Waste materials that are not suitable for commercial use would be used in mine reclamation or disposed of in commercial landfills. See Sections 2.1.6.3 and 4.1.8 for additional information.

Comment S4-1:

I live in Frackville. And I am absolutely positively opposed to this, as everyone has known, every meeting we've ever had. I am opposed to this.

Response:

The comment has been noted.

Comment S4-2:

First of all, when they show you a pretty picture of the process of how this is going to be done, they didn't show where will the water come into this and where will it go to?

Response:

Most water for project construction and operation would come from the Gilberton mine pool. Some of the water used would be consumed in facility processes. Treated wastewater from the facility would be discharged to a tailings pond that seeps to the Boston Run mine pool. Water supply sources, wastewater management, and their impacts are discussed in Sections 2.1.5.2, 2.1.6.2, 3.4, and 4.1.4.

Comment S4-3:

But yet for what I'm understanding -- and she just said -- it will go back into the mine pool, the 7 million gallon of water a day that will be used in this process. And then they're

going to take it out of the mine, they're going to clean it, use it because acidic water will not be conducive to this process. So they will clean the water, and they will use. And the water that's left over that is even more contaminated than what they've taken out of the mine pool, they're going to put it back into the mine pool to get into the streams to kill everything it touches, to get into the groundwater --

Response:

Facility wastewater would be treated before being discharged to the tailings pond from which it would seep to the mine pool system. Discharges to the mine pool system would be subject to regulation by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The potential environmental impacts of facility wastewater are discussed in Section 4.1.4.1.

Comment S4-4:

I think it's positively outrageous that we have to accept garbage, prisons, cogeneration plants. And then the first thing they tout is jobs, jobs. Well, guess what? They went out on the mountain and they started chasing the people that have the job just like cockroaches, all illegal Mexicans running into the bush. That's the kind of jobs that they produce.

Response:

Because the proposed facilities would be located within a 1-hour drive of some large labor markets (i.e., Reading, Allentown, and Wilkes-Barre), it is expected that most of the construction and operations jobs would be filled by workers who already reside in the east central Pennsylvania region (see Section 4.1.7).

Comment S5:

I am just, just saddened by this whole thing. And I do not think that a gasification plant should be put here until they come up with the truth and let us know what's going on.

Response:

The comment has been noted.

Comment S6-1:

Section 6, the cumulative effects, fails to look at the future expansion planned by WMPI for this facility, an expansion which they've bragged about in news articles you can read. That expansion is going to vastly increase the outputs, the emissions from the plant.

Response:

DOE is not aware of a proposal to expand the facility, and therefore it is not addressed in this EIS. Expansion, if any, would not be within the period affected by the DOE's proposed financial support. The applicant would be required to obtain the necessary permits for any future expansion of the site.

Comment S6-2:

It also fails to look at the cumulative air effects of the facilities in the region. This was touched upon by Mr. Gera earlier.

There's 8 other waste coal burning power plants in the region, 5 in county, 3 in the region. None of these will be considered cumulative impacts because their emissions of considered pollutants are less than 100 tons per year each. So by that logic, there can be 100 facilities located in the same area that have less than, let's say, 99.9 tons per year of emissions of each considered pollutant. And none of them will be considered because they're not required to do a cumulative impact study if those requirements are under that level. This is absurd. I'll stick to that.

Response:

See response to Comment S3-3.

Comment S7-1:

These jobs are to be filled by local union construction workers. We need these jobs desperately in Schuylkill County.

Response:

See response to S4-4.

Comment S8:

"...So they pick on an area like this where all the creeks and streams are already tainted..." (See transcript for the remainder of the comment.)

Response:

The location proposed for the proposed facilities is due in large part to the existence of the culm resource in the local area, which is a legacy of the history of mining to which the commenter refers.

Comment S9-1:

This is a poor area. Do you think for one minute that this would be happening in a wealthy area, that they would stand for it, that they would sell their children and grandchildren out because they so desperately need a job?

Response:

Section 4.1.7.7 addresses the possibility of disproportionate impacts to local "low-income" populations that are below the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The EIS text acknowledges that two census tracts near the site of the proposed facilities (Census Tracts 5 and 6) have poverty rates that exceed those of both the State of Pennsylvania and the United States, and that they represent low-income populations to which the adverse impacts of constructing and operating the proposed facilities could be distributed disproportionately. The EIS concludes, however, that no serious air quality, water quality, and health impacts to these populations are expected (Sections 4.1.2, 4.1.4, and 4.1.9). Therefore, there would be no disproportionately high and adverse impacts on these low-income populations.

Comment S10-1:

There's also things like comments around two years ago in the scoping period of this asking that the complete chemical composition of all the feedstocks that will be used by this plant be discussed and that mass balance be done for all the metals, halogens, sulfur compounds, radioactive compounds, and other toxic elements that will be going into this facility. That has not been done at all in this document.

Response:

See response to comment 41-10.

Comment S10-2:

And it's also not been considered that anything other than anthracite waste coal be processed in this facility yet it's been stated many times on both the news articles and also an application for the \$100 million that you're looking at giving out, that they plan on processing municipal waste, industrial waste, and biomass, which is a wild west category of almost everything else that they can burn or process. None of those are discussed in this document.

Response:

The feedstock for the proposed Gilberton facilities would be anthracite culm. The facilities would also be capable of using a blend of feedstock containing up to 25% petroleum coke. Other feedstock materials, such as municipal waste, industrial waste, and biomass, are not planned for the proposed Gilberton facilities, but may be used at other future facilities in the United States, if the integrated technologies are successfully demonstrated at Gilberton and commercialized. Appendix G has been added to this EIS to present the potential effects of a blended feedstock containing anthracite culm and up to 25% petroleum coke, and Section 4 has been supplemented appropriately.

Comment S10-3:

It also fails, in dash 2 -- 2-7 in this fails to talk about how much waste product will be produced in the beneficiation process. They talk about 4,700 tons per day of culm that will be going into the bin, but that's only the beneficiated coal. They don't talk about full amount because they have a very high ash content around here in the culm. And they can't put the actual culm that's growing in the waste coal piles around here into their finery. They have to clean it up. So that's also deficient in this document.

Response:

Sections 2.1.6.3 and 4.1.8.2 have been revised to provide additional discussion of coal beneficiation waste and its management.

Comment S10-4:

In the water issues, page 3-16 talks about the mine pool water. It totally fails to talk about lead or any other metals that are in the mine pool. There are very high elements of some toxic metals in the mine pool. That's just completely ignored.

Response:

Section 3.4.3 has been revised to present additional water quality data for the mine pool, including concentrations of lead and other metals. This information is reflected in the revised discussion in Section 4.1.4.1.

Comment S10-5:

Also, on page 4-16, also on water, they say, “Toxic and carcinogenic substances, including cyanides and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons” – which sounds big, but it causes cancer. That’s all you really need to know about it – “such as pyrene, might be present in low concentrations.” But then it says, “Any adverse effects of these substances on Mahanoy Creek water quality would probably be undetectable because of the overriding impacts of acid mine drainage.” Now, that’s some of the worst science I’ve ever seen. No insult to the folks at Battelle, but acid mine drainage impacts have nothing to do with the toxicity of things that will be going in there. So there are no overriding impacts. There are toxic materials that are going to go into that mine pool, and you’re just basically trying to find a way to ignore them

Response:

Additional information is included and discussed in Sections 2.1.6 and 4.1.4. However, effluents from the proposed facilities still cannot be characterized in detail. Therefore, contaminants that could be present in facility wastewater are identified on the basis of fundamental chemistry, characteristics of wastewaters from other gasifiers and synthetic fuels facilities, and general principles of water and wastewater treatment system design and performance. The toxic substances mentioned by the commenter are among those that could be present in the proposed facility’s wastewater discharges, but for which data are not yet available.

Acid mine drainage has made it essentially impossible for fish to survive in Mahanoy Creek in the vicinity of the proposed facilities. Although substances such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms, these substances generally do not kill off entire fish populations, even at environmental concentrations much higher than might be found in effluents from the proposed facilities. Thus, it is accurate to say that any adverse effects of these substances in the creek would probably be undetectable because of the overriding impacts of acid mine drainage.

Comment S10-6:

On solid waste, there’s discrepancies between this document and between the company’s own permit application with DEP. There’s also discrepancies between their permit applications to DEP. And so I suggest you go back and actually look at those applications and figure out how many tons per day of slag, fine solid waste, and other solid waste that they cannot produce because those numbers don’t all match.

Response:

Sections 2.1 and 4.1.8 have been revised to present and discuss information about solid wastes that is included in the permit applications. The apparent differences between values reported in different documents noted by the commenter are attributable to different bases for reporting (for example, wet weight versus dry weight) or different design assumptions.

Comment S10-7:

Simpler things like the color of the slag don't even match. And in numerous news articles, they talk about it being brown. This document says it's black. If you can't even figure out what color the stuff's going to be, it really makes me wonder if you know what's you're doing.

Response:

The color of the slag is mentioned in the EIS to help readers understand what this waste stream would look like. The actual color of the slag may vary. The EIS statement that it would be black is consistent with the most recent information provided to DOE by WMPI (Robert Hoppe, WMPI, e-mail to Diane Madden and Janice Bell, DOE, April 24, 2006, quoting Mr. Ross Fava, Shell Global Solutions (US), April 21, 2006).

Comment S10-8:

Now, there's another discrepancy. Page 4-31 talks about how the waste coal ash from the Gilberton Power Plant right next door has 0.2 parts per million in mercury yet EPA's data from 1999 when they did information collection across the whole country for mercury that was in coals and waste coals, they found waste anthracite to be 0.19, which is pretty much the same. It's impossible for the ash from having burned that to have the same concentration. It would be far higher. So you're underestimating and trying to make it seem as if there was lower levels of mercury in this waste collection than there really are. And that's also unscientific and inappropriate.

Response:

Information presented in the EIS regarding coal ash characteristics is based on available analyses of ash. The EIS does not rely on estimates from data on coal chemistry. It is likely that some of the mercury in the coal burned in a cogeneration plant volatilizes, and either is emitted to the atmosphere or is trapped by air emissions control systems. As a result, it is possible for coal combustion ash to have the same mercury concentration as the coal from which it was produced.

Comment S10-9:

In the "Alternative" section, you try to define the alternatives far too narrowly. We commented about this two years ago, and you went ahead and ignored our comments on this. You basically went ahead and said, Okay, well, we want to decide whether we're going to give money to a project of this specific type of thing; and therefore, any alternatives we can't look at because it's not the specific type of thing. That's just completely in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and intentions of looking into alternatives.

Response:

As stated in Section 2.2, the goals of a federal action establish the limits of reasonable alternatives under the NEPA process. Congress established the CCPI Program with a specific goal—to accelerate commercial deployment of advanced coal-based technologies that can generate clean, reliable, and affordable electricity in the United States. Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action (to provide cost-shared funding for the integration of coal gasification and F-T synthesis technologies to produce electricity, steam, and liquid fuels)

must be capable of meeting this goal [however, CEQ NEPA regulation 40 CFR Part 1502.14(d) requires the alternatives analysis in the EIS to include the no-action alternative].

Congress directed DOE to pursue the goal of the legislation by providing partial funding for projects owned and controlled by non-federal-government participants. This statutory requirement places DOE in a much more limited role than if the federal government were the owner and operator of the project. In the latter situation, DOE would typically review a wide variety of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. However, under the CCPI Program, DOE's role is limited to approving or disapproving the project as proposed by the participant.

As a specific example, the use of other technologies and approaches that are not applicable to coal (e.g., natural gas, wind power, solar energy, and conservation) would not contribute to the CCPI Program goal. Furthermore, DOE has no authority to spend funds on alternative technologies that have not been appropriated by Congress for the CCPI Program.

Comment S11-1:

If these jobs are going to be scientific, if they're going to be high paying technology jobs, whether new information through chemistry, laboratory work, whatever, you and I both know there are not many people in this room who are qualified to fill that type job. Are people going to be trained from this area to hold down that type high paying job?

Response:

The project proponents have made no commitment to train local residents to fill the construction and operations jobs that the proposed facilities would generate. Because the proposed facilities would be located within a 1-hour drive of some large labor markets (i.e., Reading, Allentown, and Wilkes-Barre), it is expected that most of the jobs would be filled by workers who already reside in the east central Pennsylvania region (see Section 4.1.7). However, it is likely that some of the more specialized jobs, particularly during project operations, would be filled by workers from outside the region. To account for this specialization, as well as the difference in the length of the construction and operations periods (i.e., the shorter the period, the less likely that workers would relocate), the EIS analysis assumes that 10% of the peak construction work force and 60% of the operations work force would relocate from outside the region.

Comment S12:

"...There's nothing going on in the Gilberton Valley that I can say is polluting anything..." (See transcript for the remainder of the comment.)

Response:

The comments have been noted.

Comment S13:

"...Everybody I talk to, they all tell me the same thing. You're so worried about employment and a job for you and a job for you..." (See transcript for the remainder of the comment.)

Response:

The comments have been noted.

Comment S14:

“...Money speaks louder than words...” (See transcript for the remainder of the comment.)

Response:

The comments have been noted.

Comment S15-1:

And trust me, you’re going to find people who are currently infected with mercury in our area.

Response:

It is very likely that some part or all of the population in Schuylkill County have trace amounts of mercury in their tissues. Mercury is a naturally occurring element that is found in air, water and soil. Human activities have resulted in the additional release of mercury to the environment.

Comment S15-2:

The air you’re breathing, believe me – let me tell you one thing. Interstate 81 is a tragedy. What I would like them to do is move the air quality, air quality station they have right now here in Shenandoah School District and put it up on 81. And you know what? The meters will go off the scale.

Response:

The comment has been noted. The location of the air quality monitoring station is not the responsibility of DOE. However, total suspended particulate (TSP) samplers have been installed at the Mahanoy City Sewage Treatment Plants, the Mahanoy State Prison, and the Frackville State Prison.

Comment S16-1:

But these plants are producing high amounts of mercury, and the government’s allowing it.

Response:

The power plants are operated under air permits granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Comment S17-1:

And the values of the homes aren’t going to be worth hardly anything when this comes in.

Response:

Section 3.7.3 acknowledges that the median values of owner-occupied housing in both Mahanoy and West Mahanoy townships and in the borough of Gilberton are far lower than the median value of owner-occupied housing elsewhere in Schuylkill County. EIS

Section 4.1.7.3 concludes that because the relatively small increase in demand for housing associated with the proposed project is not likely to affect housing availability or cost in Schuylkill County, it also is not likely to increase residential property values.

Comments S17-2 and S17-3:

I would like to talk about noise. ... And it says because it is a sealed prison. It is not a sealed prison. Anyone who has went on a tour of that prison realizes that prison is made up of concrete sections. And the prisoners have to walk from one concrete unit to another, to the cafeteria, to the chapel, to the unit; and they are not inside a unit all day. They are exposed to that air and so are the 570 people who work at that plant.

Response:

Potential air quality and noise impacts from construction and operation of the proposed facilities, including impacts to workers and in the vicinity of the prison, are discussed in Sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.10, which have been revised.

During operation of the proposed facilities, the principal sound sources would result from the equipment. These sound sources would be enclosed and acoustically isolated. Noise sources within the buildings would be fitted with sound-attenuating enclosures or other noise dampening measures that would meet all state and federal regulations. Workers would be required to wear hearing protection equipment during maintenance or repair events. In addition, the proposed site would provide a hearing protection program for workers.

To analyze the incremental noise effects outside the proposed facilities, a doubling rule was used, as discussed in Section 4.1.10. A doubling of sound energy indicated that the proposed site's highest sound level measurement would be 58 dB(A) (based on data provided by WMPI). For comparison, 55 dB(A) is the EPA's approximate level of a quiet subdivision during daylight hours. A change in the sound level of plus or minus 1 dB is not perceptible to the human ear, a change in the sound level of plus or minus 3 dB is the threshold of perception to the human ear, and a change of plus or minus 5 dB is clearly noticeable to the human ear. Distance attenuation estimations reveal that when the distance is doubled from a noise source, the sound level decreases three decibels. For example, if a sound level is 70 decibels at 50 feet it will be 67 decibels at 100 feet, etc. The nearest Mahanoy State Correctional Institution buildings are about 1,000 feet from the perimeter of the proposed site. The 3 dB increase in noise levels at the proposed plant site would probably be imperceptible at the Mahanoy State Correction Institution because of (1) the distance between the prison and the proposed project site, (2) planned noise attenuation measures, (3) natural and man-made terrain features and structures, and (4) the limited period during which inmates are allowed outside.

Also see the response to comment P6-1.

Comment S17-4:

What about the citizens of Morea and the Morea Community Park where the Little League comes up to play and to park? How much noise and odor will they receive from this project?

Response:

Noise from the proposed facilities would be imperceptible due to the sound-attenuating enclosure, other noise dampening measures and the distance to the city of Morea (see Section 4.1.10).

Odors from the proposed facilities should not be perceptible to the citizens of Morea or at the Morea Community Park due to the technologies to be employed including the synthesis gas cleanup equipment (see Section 4.1.2.2) and the distance from the proposed facility.

Comment S17-5:

...throwing more emissions into the air and into the fog area. They're – in nowhere in this book is there any stats on the number of accidents in the fog area between Pine Grove and Hazelton. Nowhere in this book is listed the number of fatalities that we have every year in that fog area. And now they want to add more emissions to that fog area, but they said that's okay. We'll put flashing lights up on the highway.

Response:

Section 4.1.2.2 concludes that any fog created by operation of the proposed facilities is not likely to affect Interstate 81 because of the distance from the facilities to Interstate 81. The EIS text has been revised to eliminate the reference to "flashing lights" on Interstate 81 as a possible mitigation measure because operation of the proposed facilities is not likely to increase fog on Interstate 81 and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has not raised the issue of additional fog on Interstate 81 and has not recommended mitigation for such an impact.

Comment S17-6:

And the fact that there were no other sites seriously considered for this is a puzzle.

Response:

Section 2.2.2.1 explains the rationale for not considering other sites. See response to comment S10-9.

Comment S18:

And my gravest concern is the good, the bad, and the ugly relative to mercury toxicity which at this very moment is causing a silent brain damage epidemic amongst our nation's youth and children and pets.

Let me begin with the bad. It is a known fact that the EPA is finding that their own recommended safety levels to control mercury emissions are much too high and are actually unsafe. And because of these high safety parameters, air monitoring stations are not registering toxic air emissions within safe limits.

Studies show that women exposed to these supposedly safe levels of mercury during pregnancy have children with autism, learning difficulties, poor memory, and ADHD, better know as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Response:

There is much debate on defining safe levels of mercury in blood and continues to be an active research area. The EPA continues to reconsider and refine its Clean Air Mercury

Rule that caps and reduces mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants (<http://www.epa.gov/camr/index.htm>).

Potential mercury emissions to air from the proposed facilities are discussed in Section 4.1.2.2, under the subheading “Hazardous Air Pollutants.” Sections 3.9 and 4.1.9 have been revised to include additional discussion of the human health effects of mercury exposure.

Comment S19-1:

5:00 a.m. this morning, I was walking to church from the Heights, the Annunciation down in Shenandoah. And I looked in the sky. Up near the Heights, the sky was full of stars. Where the cogen plant is, a dark cloud, no star, not one single star in the sky. And if they’re saying there is no fly ash in Gilberton, go up the Heights. There’s plenty of it. And I invite you from DEP or whoever they are, come up there. I can scrape it off of my fence, off of the deck. And the three clothes lines got enough, if I went like this, it would hit that guy in the front row. That’s how much fly ash. They’re sitting up there. I invite you up there. They’ve been there for maybe a year now. I’m sure it’s still on there. I’ll go like this. You sit there, and I’ll hit you with it. Thank you.

Response:

The comment has been noted. Potential effects of the proposed project on air quality are described in Section 4.1.2. The generation and disposal of solid wastes from the proposed project, including fly ash, are described in Section 4.1.8.2.