

December, 2009

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Affirms Resolution Regarding Prohibition of Mountain Top Removal Coal in the State of Georgia

At the December 1, 2009 meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, representatives from the Public Policy Advocacy Committee (PPAC) of the Presbytery along with guest, Alexis Myers from Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, presented a joint resolution from PPAC and the following congregations -Central, Hillside, Morningside, Oakhurst, Trinity (Atlanta) as follows:

“Therefore, be it resolved, that the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta urges the Georgia General Assembly to enact legislation - House Bill 276 - prohibiting, over a timed phase, the purchase or use of mountaintop removal coal for use in Georgia power plants, or in any other energy-producing process and that there be a moratorium imposed on the issuance of permits for the construction of any new coal-fired electrical generating facilities in Georgia until July, 2014. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta directs the Public Policy Advocate for the Presbytery to advocate in behalf of issues addressed in this resolution, specifically, but not limited to, House Bill 276 and any complementary measures that may arise.”

The resolution was affirmed by the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta at its meeting on December 1, 2009.

The resolution was patterned after one by Salem Presbytery (North Carolina) that was presented and passed as a Commissioner’s resolution by the 217th General Assembly of Presbyterians in Birmingham in 2006. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Catholic Conference of Eastern Kentucky have all passed resolutions regarding mountain top removal mining.

Georgia is the #1 user of mountaintop removal coal in the United States according to ilovemountains.org and North Carolina takes the #2 spot. In 2009, citizens and legislators in 10 states - including Georgia and North Carolina - took action to decrease or eliminate the use of mountain top removal coal. According to ilovemountains.org the other states that have taken action include Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia.

The Georgia House Bill #276 awaits discussion in the Industrial Relations Committee. The Public Policy Advocacy Committee hopes that by bringing this resolution to the attention of the legislators who serve on this committee as well as to advocates in the other presbyteries in the state of Georgia, we may help move this bill through and be witness to God’s instruction to “not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell...” (Numbers 35:34) and to Jesus’ instruction, “In everything do to others what you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

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