



Dear Chancellor Witt:

We thank you for meeting with us in Tuscaloosa on September 13, 2013, after the conclusion of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama System. At that meeting you heard individual testimony about the proposed Shepherd Bend Mine across the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior River, located only 800 feet upstream from a Birmingham Water Works drinking water intake facility. The faculty of the University are concerned that surface mining at this environmentally sensitive location has an unacceptably high probability of negatively affecting the quality and affordability of drinking water for a large portion of Birmingham residents. Because the proposed mine involves land to which the University of Alabama owns the mineral rights, the issue is of concern to the University. Since many students and their families live in communities that could be affected, the student governments are particularly concerned about the potential impact on the health and wellness of our students and their families.

Over recent years repeated requests to address this concern have come to the Faculty Senates. In response, we recently sought advice from faculty experts on the issue; they validated the legitimacy of the concern. Having had time to consider a list of key facts, the Faculty Senate at UAB and the Senate Steering committees at UA and UAH were all in favor of bringing our concern to the attention of the University of Alabama System (the votes at UAB and UA were unanimous). The undergraduate and graduate student bodies of our campuses have expressed their concern and opposition to the proposed coal mining at the Shepherd Bend now and on several prior occasions. We characterize the sentiment of both students and faculty across our universities on this environmental issue as one of great concern for the environment, the health of our community as well as for the reputation and integrity of our institution.

We kindly request that you communicate any impending action by the university with regards to the mineral rights at Shepherd Bend to the faculty senates, undergraduate and graduate student governments of UA, UAB and UAH with ample advance notice.

Sincerely,

Michael Frölich
Chair, Faculty Senate (UAB)

Mitch Berbrier
President, Faculty Senate (UAH)

Steve Miller
President, Faculty Senate (UA)

Andrew Hayes
President, USGA (UAB)

Amanda Plain
President, GSA (UAB)

Nandish Dayal
President, SGA (UAH)