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## Bush Administration Mountaintop Mining Rule Called a Disgrace

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### **Friends of the Earth disagrees with rule and rulemaking process, calls for congressional oversight**

WASHINGTON--Friends of the Earth President Brent Blackwelder responded to the Bush administration's planned mountaintop coal mining rule with the following statement:

"The Bush administration's effort to sanction mountaintop mining is a disgrace. I've flown over mountains and seen firsthand the massive scale of the destruction where this mining has occurred. This type of mining blows mountains to pieces, destroys habitat, sends toxic runoff into streams and rivers, and causes hardship and adversity for the people who live nearby. And of course, coal has other problems. Turning away from coal means not only less destruction in our heartland but also more safety for our workers and less global warming, giving our planet a better chance of long-term survival.

"In addition to disagreeing with the substance of the proposed rule, Friends of the Earth has concerns about the rulemaking process. According to press accounts, administration officials have said they are not likely to change the proposed rule in response to comments received during the 60-day period. This makes a mockery of the public comment process and violates basic legal principles. We are also concerned about the possibility that former Interior Department staffer J. Steven Griles, a convicted felon associated with Jack Abramoff, may have played an improper role in the rule's formation. Congress should use its oversight authority to address these concerns."

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