WARNING: High Hazard Dam Proposed in Hillsboro City Limits

Class I Level High Hazard Dam is Being Built in City Limits by the Deer Run Mine

How will this affect your property values? Your family's safety? The Future of Hillsboro?
Whenever the mine leaves, who pays for upkeep to this? Will it be your city taxes?

Class I High Hazard Dam, If Failure Occurs, Means Loss of Human Life and Property Is Likely

Description: This dam will be 80 feet high, 6430 feet long in a rectangular shape, with 93 feet head of coal slurry at top

Facts: Coal Slurry contains heavy metals, arsenic, lead, etc., and chemicals from coal processing that are risks to human health and the environment.

These toxins are not removed and will remain in this impoundment for generations to come. In spite of assurances from the regulatory agency we have seen seepage from other high hazard dams that have harmed citizens' lives and property.

The Deer Run Mine permit approved by the state in 2009 did not contain specifications for this High Hazard Dam. Intent to build a High Hazard Dam was not disclosed during Zoning Hearings or other public presentations from the mine. This is a major change in what the mine proposed to the city.

In 2010, the mine applied for a revision to add this High Hazard Dam. No public notice for this High Hazard Dam has been posted in Hillsboro. It was first revealed to the public at the informal conference August 16, 2011. Work has already begun. No permit has been issued from the state Office of Water Resources that monitors these dams. Below are questions that need answers before this structure proceeds.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resoures (OWR) permits High Hazard Dams.

On August 23, 2011, the OWR sent Hillsboro Energy a Cease and Desist Letter to stop all work on the coal slurry impoundment. The mine does not have a permit from OWR or from IDNR to construct the High Hazard Dam.

Send your request for a public hearing on this High Hazard Dam to:
Mr. Marc Miller, Director
Ill. Dept. of Natural Resources
One Natural Resource Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Director Arlan R. Juhl, P.E
Office of Water Resources
Ill. Dept. of Natural Resources
One Natural Resource Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Questions That Should Be Answered About This High Hazard Dam

1. If the Office of Water Resources (OWR) permit for construction of the High Hazard Dam for Refuse Disposal Area (RDA) No. 1 at the Deer Run Mine is not yet approved, how can the construction work clearly already done at the mine be what is necessary for the base of this 80 foot high coal slurry impoundment?

2. If the OWR permit is not yet approved, how can the liner system that has already been installed be what is necessary for the base of what is stated to be 93 feet of head of coal slurry when this impoundment is filled?

3. How far is this impoundment from the tributary to Big Four / Old Hillsboro Lake?

4. What prevents underground and surface contamination of this tributary?

5. If this High Hazard Dam has a break, breach, or other failure and coal slurry enters the tributary to Big Four/Old Hillsboro Lake, how will this be cleaned up?

6. Who pays for the clean up?

7. If a coal slurry plume enters Big Four/Old Lake Hillsboro, could the lake be rendered unfit water for public use ?

8. Is the mine bonded to pay for replacement of Big Four/Old Lake Hillsboro?

9. What is the bond for this RDA?

10. What insurance coverage does the mine have for this RDA?

11. Who at the mine is responsible for the oversight and management of this RDA?

12. What contacts does the city have 24/7 at the mine regarding any problems that might be observed at this RDA?

13. What is the zone of impact for a dam break at this RDA?

14. Who pays to clean up any coal slurry that leaves the mine permit area?

15. What earthquake level is this RDA rated for?

16. What chemicals from the coal wash process are used, what are the specific Constitutents of Concern in the coal slurry, and how often is the coal slurry tested for analysis of what toxins it contains?

17. How does the city get a copy of the MSDS chemical contents reports and health concerns for all chemicals used in the coal wash process?

18. How does the city get a copy of the full toxicity reports regarding the coal slurry?

19. Is the coal slurry tested for all potential heavy metals, including mercury, lead, selenium, manganese, arsenic, chromium, cadmium, iron, beryllium, etc.?

20. Is the coal slurry tested for both volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds that are found in coal? The 2010 West Virginia Report analyzed coal slurry for 16 volatile organic compounds such as toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene, etc. and approximately 10 PAHs such as dibenzoanthracene, benzoperylene, benzofluoranthene, etc.

21. If contaminants leach into the underground shallow aquifer sands, how will this be detected?

22. It does not appear there are enough monitoring wells to provide adequate overlay for coverage of the zone of capture to adequately monitor potential groundwater contamination. Why is this?

23. How are the underground sand layers and sand lenses being monitored for any contamination, as pollutants can migrate much faster through these layers ?

24. How many sand lenses were encountered in the construction of the bottom of this RDA?

25. What was done when sand lenses were encountered and how can the city get copies of the engineer's verifications for any work done regarding special treatment of these sand lenses ? Were sand lenses encountered in excavation of this RDA base mapped?

26. Are protective measures to be taken when sand lenses are encountered in the construction of the base of this RDA included in the OWR permit for this High Hazard Dam?

27. What are they and how were they monitored since the base construction has been completed?

28. How long will this RDA last?

29. After the mine closes, who is responsible for maintaining the walls, cover, base, monitoring wells, and water monitoring testing for this RDA?

30. After the mine closes, who pays for any failure and damages from this RDA?

31. What happens to the heavy metals, coal wash chemicals, and other toxics in this RDA once this RDA is full and covered with dirt?

32. What will the acres containing this RDA be after it is full of coal slurry and covered with dirt?

33. Will there be restrictions on what can be done in the area around this RDA?

34. Who will own this property once the mine is closed and this RDA remains 80 feet high filled with coal slurry?

35. When the 40 mil HDPE liners that are the base of this RDA leak, where will whatever leaks from this RDA go?

36. What toxins will be in what leaks from under this RDA?

37. What studies have been done by OWR to calculate how fast underground water in this area travels?

38. What direction does underground water below this RDA go?

39. Is OWR aware this RDA is placed in the headwaters area for several creeks?

40. What studies have been done on the impact of longwall mining subsidence on the stability of High Hazard Dams such as this?

41. What guarantees does the City of Hillsboro have that the earthquake like impacts of subsidence to the east of this RDA will not cause eventual shifting of this RDA?

42. How far away from this RDA will longwall mining be done?

43. Will the longwall mining subsidence affect the watershed to the east and south of this RDA?

44. Will the subsidence create any additional hazards to underground water contamination from this RDA?

45. If this RDA is expected to be filled up in less than 5 years of coal production, and the mine has stated it expects to be in operation for at least 30 years (or more), where will future RDAs be placed? Will they all be in the city limits of Hillsboro?

46. What is the cummulative impact of 6 or so 80 foot high RDAs on area property values, land development potential, local tax base, and liability to the City of Hillsboro?

47. What other options besides a High Hazard Dam RDA has the Deer Run Mine considered and does the Office of Water Resources recommend any other means of treatment for coal slurry than building High Hazard Dams?

48. Has the OWR ever denied a High Hazard Dam Permit? How many? When? Why?

49. Can the OWR deny this High Hazard Dam Permit?

50. What would be necessary for OWR to deny this High Hazard Dam Permit?

51. Does Hillsboro Energy have a permit from Army corps of Engineers? If so, what date was it issued and what is the ID number?

This ad is placed by the Illinois Sierra Mining Issues Committee to Protect the Environment, For Our Families and For Our Future