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Cassville Residents Voice Concern over Mine Permit

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Residents are concerned about Patriot Mining's New Hill East Mine.

By Mike Krafcik

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CASSVILLE -- The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection conducted a public meeting Tuesday to address the concerns over a permit renewal for a Monongalia County strip mine.

During the meeting, Cassville residents and environmentalists voiced their concerns over the DEP's permit renewal for Patriot Mining's New Hill East Mine.

"There is very little monitoring of coal-combustion waste pollutants at any of these mines," said Anne Hereford, of Downstream Strategies.

Residents spoke about how that mine is creating high levels of fly-ash and worsening the area's water quality. The DEP says testing doesn't show any adverse impact.

"From all of our testing and the company's testing-- we have not seen an impact from the fly ash," said Randy Moore, of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Residents say the DEP testing isn't thorough enough. They said some heavy metals and other toxins may go undetected. All in all, they say there needs to be more samples collected more frequently.

"If they're gonna renew this permit they need to sample and show that there really is no problem like they say it is," said Petra Wood of Cassville.

DEP officials said they will take public comments and other factors into consideration before approving or rejecting the permit.

"We have a lot of existing data on the permit that we would look at and have to be in compliance of before we renew this permit," said Moore.





The DEP renews the permits every five years and says it could reach a decision on this one within the next few weeks.

Cassville residents also are fighting a permit for a proposed 250-acre Patriot Mining mine right next to the East mine.

The Sierra Club has already appealed the DEP's water permit for that mine. A hearing with the state's Environmental Quality Board is set for November.

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