

Black Warrior RIVERKEEPER®
712 37th Street South
Birmingham, AL 35222
(205) 458-0095
nbrooke@blackwarriorriver.org
edillard@blackwarriorriver.org
www.BlackWarriorRiver.org



For Immediate Release
February 16, 2011

An Open Letter to the University of Alabama System

Dr. Robert E. Witt, President
The University of Alabama
401 Queen City Avenue
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401-1551

Re: Shepherd Bend Mine

Dear President Witt:

Black Warrior Riverkeeper and other concerned citizens have been asking the University of Alabama (University) and the UA System Board of Trustees (Trustees) not to lease land or mineral rights to Shepherd Bend, LLC for a surface coal mine that will discharge polluted water to the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior River 800 feet upstream of a primary drinking water intake for the Birmingham Water Works Board ("BWWB"). In previous correspondence, we have supplied extensive scientific information which indicates that the Shepherd Bend Mine will likely result in mining-related pollutants flowing into the intake and on to the BWWB's treatment facilities. Every single day, over 200,000 of Alabama's citizens rely on this intake for clean, safe, and affordable drinking water.

To date, neither the University nor the Trustees have taken a stand on this important issue of public interest, responding only that there is currently no proposal before you to lease the property. Given the fact that Shepherd Bend, LLC has the necessary regulatory permits to begin coal mining, we think it is time for the University and the Trustees to take a public stand as to whether you will lease land and mineral rights for this strip mine.

With an emphasis on education and service as well as a mission of improving the quality of life for all Alabamians, it is entirely appropriate for the University and the Trustees to play a leadership role on the Shepherd Bend Mine issue. You have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the importance of prudent long-term stewardship over short term gain.

We ask that the University and the Trustees publicly answer this one question:

**Will you lease land and mineral rights at Shepherd Bend
to Shepherd Bend, LLC for their coal mining operation?**

YES or NO?

For the river,

Nelson Brooke
Riverkeeper

Eva Dillard
Staff Attorney

Cc: Dr. Malcolm Portera, Chancellor
The University of Alabama System