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UAB Graduate Student Association Resolution Implores UA System to Stop the Shepherd Bend Mine

Birmingham – The Graduate Student Association (GSA) at UAB has unanimously passed a [Resolution](#) imploring the University of Alabama System (UA) to stop the proposed [Shepherd Bend Mine](#) from polluting a major drinking water supply for the greater Birmingham area. UA is the major owner of land and mineral rights coveted for a proposed coal mine on the Black Warrior River's Mulberry Fork in Walker County. The 1,773-acre strip mine would discharge wastewater 800 feet across the river from a Birmingham Water Works Board intake facility providing drinking water to 200,000 residents daily.

GSA Senators expressed concern that heavy metals and sediment discharged from the mine would lead to decreased water quality and increased filtration fees for consumers. Scientists, businesses, environmental, civil rights and religious organizations, UA and UAB alumni, faculty and students, and governments (including the Birmingham City Council), have all implored UA not to lease or sell their land and minerals to Shepherd Bend, LLC. That company is owned by Garry Neil Drummond, a Trustee Emeritus of UA. Without access to UA's significant land and mineral holdings, it may not be practical for mining to begin at Shepherd Bend.

"I'm so proud that we are exercising our civic duty as graduate students by taking action on preserving the river," said Tyrel Smith, GSA Senator. "The Graduate Student Association understands the importance of voicing our opinion to help protect Birmingham's drinking water as well as the delicate ecosystem in the Black Warrior River."

"The UAB Graduate Student Association wants to safeguard their city's water – and their school's reputation – from the Shepherd Bend Mine proposal," said Charles Scribner, Executive Director of Black Warrior Riverkeeper. "Now it is time for UA System leaders to take a stand against this mine."

Black Warrior Riverkeeper recently filed a [petition](#) with the Alabama Surface Mining Commission (ASMC) to designate areas upstream of the Mulberry Fork drinking water intake as lands unsuitable for surface coal mining. [Public comments](#) on that petition must be received by the ASMC by January 31.

To view an aerial photo by Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper, showing the water intake facility, the Black Warrior River's Mulberry Fork, and the proposed mine site, [click here](#).

To view the UAB GSA Resolution, [click here](#).

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper (blackwarriorriver.org) is a citizen-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. A member of Waterkeeper Alliance, Black Warrior Riverkeeper was the Alabama Environmental Council's 2007 Conservation Organization of the Year and the American Canoe Association's 2008 Green Paddle Award winner. Nelson Brooke, Riverkeeper, won the Alabama Rivers Alliance's 2010 River Hero Award. In 2011, the Black Warrior became one of America's [Most Endangered Rivers](#) due to coal pollution.