

For Immediate Release
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August 28 Public Hearing on Shepherd Bend Mine, a Threat to 200,000 Alabamians' Drinking Water

Sumiton, Ala. – In response to numerous requests from a broad range of stakeholders, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) will hold a public hearing on Thursday, August 28 at 6 pm regarding the proposed Shepherd Bend Mine, a threat to drinking water for 200,000 people in the greater Birmingham area. The hearing will be at the Tom Bevill Building Exhibit Hall, Building 1400, Bevill State Community College Sumiton Campus, 101 State Street, Sumiton, AL 35148. Those at the hearing may comment on the draft Clean Water Act permit for water pollution discharges from the mine into the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior River. ADEM will also accept written comments about the mine at the August 28 hearing or by mail before 5 pm on August 29. Send comments to Russell A. Kelly, Chief | Permits and Services Division | ADEM | P. O. Box 30130-1463 | Montgomery, AL 36110-2059 | rak@adem.state.al.us

Background:

ADEM issued a wastewater discharge – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) – permit to Drummond Company subsidiary Shepherd Bend, LLC on July 21, 2008. Due to public opposition and other challenges, coal mining never started, and the permit's 5 year term expired. Shepherd Bend, LLC recently applied to renew its permit and ADEM released the draft [NPDES Permit No. AL0079162](#) currently under consideration.

This 1,773-acre strip mine would discharge polluted water at 29 outfalls, including one that is 800 feet across the river from the Birmingham Water Works Board's Mulberry Intake facility, which is one of greater Birmingham's main drinking water sources. Heavy metals, sediment, and other pollutants discharged from Shepherd Bend Mine into the Mulberry Fork would lead to diminished source water quality and potentially increased water rates for customers of the Birmingham Water Works.

[Preeminent scientists](#) studying water pollution from coal mines recently wrote the following in public comments: "Despite our extensive collective experience regarding permit applications in the coalfields of West Virginia and Kentucky, the Shepherd's Bend mine is the first mining permit application that we have seen immediately adjacent to a public drinking water supply. Given the extensive literature linking surface coal mining to a variety of human health problems with enormous associated public health costs such activity seems particularly ill advised."

To read Black Warrior Riverkeeper's recent Shepherd Bend Mine permit comments to ADEM, [click here](#).

To view an aerial photo by Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper, of the proposed Shepherd Bend Mine, the Black Warrior River's Mulberry Fork, and the Birmingham Water Works' Mulberry Intake, [click here](#).

To learn more about the Shepherd Bend Mine proposal and The University of Alabama's pivotal role in the process as the major owner of land and minerals at Shepherd Bend, visit Black Warrior Riverkeeper's [Shepherd Bend page](#).

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. We are a citizen-based nonprofit organization promoting clean water for improved public health, recreation, and wildlife habitat throughout the Black Warrior River watershed. Learn more at www.BlackWarriorRiver.org.