

5/18/17

“Presented at BOR “Listening Session”

My name is Melvin George. I am a member of the Hopi Tribe and from the village of Kykotsmovi.

Black Mesa Trust was founded in 1998 with the singular mission of saving drinking water stored deep under our sacred land. We will succeed, but the price for allowing industrial use of pristine drinking water has been unconscionably high.

- Over 45 billion gallons of water stored in ancient aquifers is gone forever. This would have been enough water to sustain a Hopi population of 10,000 people for over 300 years, but it was gone in just 47 years.
- Many springs are now dry and an unknown number of others are contaminated. Some of the springs were used to conduct ceremonies.
- An unknown number of Hopi ancestral villages, burial sites, sacred shrines and petroglyphs have been destroyed. These were footprints of our ancestors who settled on Black Mesa over 1,000 years ago.
- Hundreds of acres of cedar trees have been uprooted by bulldozers. Cedars are used for purification and medicine.
- The dynamiting of coal seams has released an unknown quantity of methane gas. Coal fires may have been ignited and if so they are still burning, creating cave-like tunnels within the mesa.
- The extraction of billions of waters stored in highly-pressurized aquifers has caused thousands of sinkholes in the landscape.
- Impacts on the health of Diné (Navajo people) living downwind from the mine area and their livestock, their main source of livelihood, have never been objectively investigated.
- Nor has the impact of groundwater pumping on Siipapu, place of Emergence from the Third World to the Fourth World, located near the convergence of Little Colorado River and the main Colorado River been examined.
- Over 165 impoundment ponds built by the mining company have blocked the rainwater and snowmelt that used to flow through washes to Siipa’pu.
- Moencopi Wash, which once provided water for fields and crops, is bone dry most of the year. The impoundments were authorized by U.S. Army

Corp of Engineers without full investigation of the environmental or cultural impacts or the possible effects on Moencopi farmers and endangered species.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Black Mesa Trust uncovered records that showed Peabody was selling water leased from Hopi to owners of Mohave Generating Station for \$1000 per acre-foot. Two certified letters were sent to DOI Secretary Jewell asking for an inquiry into the Peabody sale of our water without our knowledge. To date, we have not received any response.

We must hold the federal government, Peabody, and owners of Navajo Generating Station, which includes U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, accountable for leaving us with a devastated landscape, the irretrievable loss of drinking water, compromised aquifers and the destruction of cultural sites and artifacts, not to mention desecration of our ancestors' burial sites.

Melvin A. George