

CORPORATE WELFARE

My name is Tom Thomas and I would like to thank the DEP for the opportunity to comment on the air quality aspect of the Hawbaker proposal in Barkeyville, Pa, I hope that my remarks are NOT misconstrued as either “ignorant” or “hurtful”. This process is a fine example of our system of Democracy in action but for a low level bureaucrat to name call concerned citizens, only demonstrates how these public employees view their employers. I will present the numerous tax exemptions granted to the Hawbaker company to grace us slack-jawed citizens with their coal fired air pollution, truck traffic, minimal job creation, and little league baseball sponsorship.

Let’s talk Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ). According to the Pa Department of Revenue regarding KOZ’S -- “Business and property owners are given priority consideration for various community-building assistance programs.”

WAIVED STATE TAXES:

- Corporate Net Income Tax
- Capital Stock and Foreign Franchise Tax
- Personal Income Tax
- Sales and Use Tax (purchases consumed and used by businesses in the KOZ)
- Bank and Trust Company Shares Tax
- Mutual Thrift Institutions Tax
- Insurance Premiums Tax

WAIVED LOCAL TAXES:

- Earned income/Net Profits Tax
- Business Gross Receipts, Business Occupancy, Business Privilege and Mercantile Tax
- Local Real Property Tax
- Sales and Use Tax (county/city; purchases used and consumed by businesses in the Zone)
- Wage and Net Profits Tax

These tax savings are available uninterrupted for 12 years. For Hawbaker, these tax exemptions will last X years as the range is still undetermined--3 to 5 years?? Also Mr.Randy Seitz of the Oil Region Alliance was quoted in the March 7, 2007 News-Herald stating, “the Alliance took a loss on selling the property in order to get the Hawbaker deal.” By selling the property for a “loss”, the tax supported Oil Region Alliance has given more of our tax dollars away to Hawbaker. We can now see the corporate welfare attached to this project which is NOT the soft industry that was the original spirit of the Barkeyville Industrial Park. An inside deal, by a man wearing at least two hats, made this project possible.

I would like to ask the DEP to closely examine the coal fired nature of this project and apply the Best Available Control Technology to that technology and the other air quality aspects of this project. We, as citizens, are going to underwrite the plant regarding tax exemptions and property purchase; we, as citizens, are going to be the most impacted by this project; we, as citizens, deserve the Best Available Control Technology from the Commonwealth’s DEP. Between the idling haul trucks, fugitive emissions, air pollution from the asphalt production and the coal fired pollution maybe the DEP should consider an Environmental Impact Statement before this permit is moved forward. The Inconvenient Truth about this industrial pollution is more greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Please examine this proposal in total. Thank you.