

# What is the **ACHE Act** and why is it so important?

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a daily average of

**5.5**  
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Over the past 15 years a new form of surface mining known as mountaintop removal has been taking place in mountain communities of West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

A daily average of **5.5 million pounds of explosives** consisting of a toxic ammonium nitrate diesel fuel mix are being detonated directly above people's homes to blast entire mountains to rubble in order to reach small seams of coal. Our energy supply does not depend on this type of mining, but it is a highly profitable investment for the coal industry because it employs far fewer workers and extracts coal quickly.

Residents face **accelerated rates of cancer, respiratory diseases and birth defects** within their communities near this destructive form of mining. Cancer rates in some communities near mountaintop removal mining are twice that of other Appalachian communities. Birth defects have risen dramatically as mountaintop removal has expanded. Heart, lung and kidney disease rates are higher.



Appalachian Community  
**HEALTH EMERGENCY**

DC Office: 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Suite B-1, Washington, DC 20002  
WV Office: PO Box 303, Naoma, WV 25140

**A mother who lives in the southern coalfields of West Virginia holds the multiple**



**prescriptions that aid with her ten-yr old son's breathing.**

Now, an ever-growing body of scientific research is pointing to mountaintop removal coal mining as the explanation for the sharp rise in serious health problems in communities near mountaintop removal mining. As newer studies connect the dots between mountaintop removal and health, Appalachian residents are increasingly concerned about contaminants in their air and soil. These include elevated levels of ammonium nitrate, silica, sulfur compounds, metals, benzene, carbon monoxide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and nitrogen dioxide.

The ACHE Act is the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act, House Resolution 526. It was introduced in the United States Congress on February 6, 2013, to protect communities from the growing and urgent health emergency in Appalachia.



## **What does the ACHE Act do?**

The Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act (ACHE Act, House Resolution 526) places a pause on new mountaintop removal permits and expansion of existing permits. The ACHE Act directs the federal Department of Health and Human Services to launch a federal health study in Appalachian mountaintop removal communities to determine the cause of the abnormal health disparities. The ACHE Act also requires air and water monitoring at existing mountaintop removal sites and reporting of such to Health and Human Services. Upon completion of the health study the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall publish a determination on whether mountaintop removal coal mining presents any health risks to individuals in surrounding mountaintop removal communities.



Please visit **[www.acheact.org](http://www.acheact.org)** to learn how you can support the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act (H.R. 526, The ACHE Act).



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