

## Validation Study Confirms No Material Harm to Navajo Aquifer From Mining Activities

PRNewswire  
ST. LOUIS

Peabody Energy today released results of a model validation initiative verifying that a first-of-its-kind three-dimensional (3-D) model is accurately predicting the impacts of industrial and municipal water use on the 7,500-square-mile Navajo Aquifer in northeastern Arizona.

The analysis compared model simulations to measured hydrologic behavior over a four-year period, demonstrating that the model is sound. The findings also reaffirm a half-century of research that consistently shows that using aquifer water to convey coal from the Black Mesa Mine to Nevada's Mohave Generating Station has no significant effect on the integrity of the aquifer or surrounding community water supplies.

The 3-D model was released in 1999. The model analyzes water flow within the seven geologic layers comprising the D- and N-Aquifers and simulates the interconnections between the systems. It also provides a state-of-the-art tool for current and future water studies and long-term tribal water management needs.

Within the Black Mesa basin, the Navajo Aquifer spans an area the size of Delaware and holds more than 400 million acre-feet of water. Comprised of porous sandstone, the aquifer provides storage and serves as a transmitter, allowing water to flow through it toward springs, streams and wells. The aquifer system is replenished naturally by rain and snowmelt.

The Navajo Aquifer is among the most thoroughly studied water resources in the nation. More than 11 major public and private studies conclude that mining will use less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the total volume of water stored in the aquifer during the life of the operations. This use equates to removing less than half of a beverage can from a 55-gallon drum.

"The science continues to conclude that using this water for industrial purposes has virtually no impact on the massive aquifer," said Fredrick D. Palmer, executive vice president for Legal and External Affairs. "However, we operate on Black Mesa in partnership with the Hopi and Navajo. We recognize the tribes have concerns about use of this water, which is why we continue to support efforts to develop an alternative water source that would benefit both tribes."

Peabody is participating in discussions with the Hopi and Navajo as well as the owners of the Mohave Generating Station to explore development of projects that would increase the water supply to Hopi and Navajo communities as well as create a new water source to convey coal from the Black Mesa to Mohave Station. The projects would enhance the standard of living for the Hopi and the Navajo and show respect to cultural and religious concerns about use of water. The initiative was announced Aug. 15, 2001. Discussions are complex and involve numerous stakeholders. A final decision will require the cooperation of all involved parties, including the Hopi Tribe, the Navajo Nation and the federal government.

For more than three decades, Peabody's Black Mesa and Kayenta surface mines have helped provide low-cost electricity to fuel the economic growth of the Southwest in major cities including Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Phoenix. Mining injects about \$2 million weekly in direct economic benefits to tribal communities.

Peabody Energy is the world's largest private-sector coal company. Its coal products fuel more than 9 percent of all U.S. electricity generation and more than 2 percent of worldwide electricity generation.

MAKE YOUR OPINION COUNT - Click Here  
<http://tbutton.prnewswire.com/prn/11690X14685377>

SOURCE: Peabody Energy

Contact: Beth Sutton of Peabody Energy, +1-520-525-3168

Website: <http://www.peabodyenergy.com/>

---