

RESOLUTION NO. ____

**AUTHORIZING OPPOSITION OF WATER WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE SALT FORK OF VERMILION RIVER IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
FOR COAL MINE USE IN VERMILION AND CHAMPAIGN COUNTIES**

WHEREAS, coal mining interests have been securing mineral rights located within Vermilion and Champaign Counties, Illinois, have applied for a state mining permit and have secured a potable water supply in order to place an underground mine operation within the confines of Vermilion and Champaign Counties, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, coal mining interests have sought approximately 750,000 to 1,008,000 gallons per day raw water supply for onsite mining operations, including washing coal, from the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River in Champaign County and will discharge as much as 10% of the water withdrawn from the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River back to the river system laden with salts, heavy metals and suspended solids after use in coal washing operations and to suppress dust at the mine site; and

WHEREAS, the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River has many existing uses that rely on clean and abundant water, including 1) support of rare, threatened, and endangered species of mussels and fish, 2) downstream water withdrawals for the drinking water supply for the Village of Oakwood, 3) recreation including swimming, paddling, angling, etc.; and

WHEREAS, the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River is considered impaired per the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency due to excessive levels of pollutants and removing water from the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River will likely exacerbate existing water quality impairments and threaten existing uses; and

WHEREAS, Champaign County has adopted a ~~comprehensive~~ Land Resource Management Plan that heretofore places an emphasis on the protection of natural resources and the environment of the County; and

WHEREAS, performance criteria, as utilized by both state and federal mining law address concerns in the areas of mine site conformance to the County's ~~Comprehensive Land Use~~ Resource Management Plan, Conservation Lands Systems and other related conservation plans, prevention of water quality and quantity impacts, concurrent reclamation and visual impacts; and

WHEREAS, both state and federal law will be required to take into account consistency with local land use and development plans, which in this case is the Champaign County ~~Comprehensive Land~~ Resource Management Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, typical legacy impacts including depleted resources, degraded infrastructure, and land and water pollution left behind from prior and existing mines may place undue costs and adverse impacts on the tax payers of Champaign and Vermilion Counties with few local tax benefits, and is therefore unacceptable, and

WHEREAS, water quality impacts from underground mines are consistently underestimated and therefore the mitigation is consistently inadequate; and

WHEREAS, the practice of underground mining and the associated subsidence typically had a serious effect on area geology, particularly on flat surface lands, and that remediation of the subsidence has proven to be detrimental to the land; and

WHEREAS, the information coal mining interests has provided the County to date leaves many questions unanswered and is insufficient to determine if and how Champaign County would be able to meet any environmental performance criteria outlined by the County to address the negative impacts associated with surface water withdrawals.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Champaign County Board opposes water withdrawals from the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River in Champaign County for coal mine use in Vermilion and Champaign Counties.
2. Champaign County will continue to actively comment on any future plans of operations regarding water withdrawals and water discharges submitted on any such mine, including during any formal review by agencies and offices of the Federal and State Governments.

PRESENTED, PASSED, APPROVED, AND RECORDED this 20th day of June, A.D. 2013.

SIGNED:

ATTEST:

Alan Kurtz, Chair
Champaign County Board
Champaign, Illinois

Gordy Hulten,
County Clerk and *Ex Officio* Clerk of the
Champaign County Board