

In March, [I wrote here](#) about EPA's newfound boldness on mountaintop removal mining. Under current regulations, the Corps of Engineers issues permits for that practice under Clean Water Act section 404, but EPA has the authority to veto those permits. EPA, which was entirely passive on the matter under the Bush administration, had sent objections to the Corps on a couple of permits, and announced that "it would take a close look" at others.

It is now clear that a close look doesn't mean blanket opposition. Nick Rahall, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, has released [a letter from EPA](#) indicating that, of 48 permit applications the agency has reviewed, it has approved 42 and objected to only 6. Coal Tattoo (the Charleston Gazette's blog on all things coal mining) has the story [here](#). NRDC's view is [here](#).