



Verizon Wireless Sponsors Anti-Energy Bill, Right Wing Event

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Verizon Wireless sponsored a rally in West Virginia on Labor Day that was organized by climate bill foes and which was attended by conservative FOX News personality Sean Hannity and controversial guitarist, Ted Nugent. Several environmental groups had asked Verizon Wireless to pull from the event, which was put together by Massey Energy, one of the country's top coal producers.

Some 75,000 people were due to attend the "Friends of America Rally" in Holden, West Virginia. Rally organizers called for those attending to "stand up for American jobs" by opposing the energy bill that passed the House in June (H.R. 2454). The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Henry Waxman and Edward Markley and it calls, among other things, for greater environmental accountability from coal producers.

Dozens of coal companies and other industry-related businesses [sponsored](#) the event, but a coalition of over 40 environmental groups, including Greenpeace USA and the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), was outraged by Verizon Wireless' participation. They

sent a letter to the cell phone company on Friday asking them to not support the event. Verizon did not answer to the letter and the groups released a [news release](#):

“Despite the rally’s name, it is not friendly to America to cling to an industry that keeps Appalachia in a stranglehold of economic and environmental impoverishment by permanently polluting water supplies, blocking green-energy development and economic diversification, and contributing to global climate change. Coal corporations are making millions of dollars off destroying the mountains, and only pollution and poverty are trickling down to residents,” said Tierra Curry, a native of eastern Kentucky and biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity.

“Americans want clean drinking water and a transition to a green economy that the planet can sustain and that provides a good quality of life for our children and grandchildren. Verizon Wireless, unfortunately, has aligned itself with the extremists who advocate for the catastrophic effects of mining and burning coal,” added Curry in the statement.

At the rally, aside from publicly condemning the Waxman-Markley bill, conservatives attending the event pressed on other issues. Musician Ted Nugent told the crowd that they didn’t need the Bill of Rights to tell them that “God gave” them the right to keep and bear arms.

“Keep means, it’s mine, you can’t have it. Bear means I got them right here,” said Nugent to the crowd waving American flags. Nugent also said that the country was being “dominated” by a president and an administration that “clearly hate America.”

Sean Hannity also took the stage to speak to the crowd. In his speech, Hannity said that if he had a teleprompter like Obama’s, his would say, “Yes we can get rid of Pelosi, Reed, and Obama. That’s what I want my teleprompter to read.”

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