

Heartland Coalfield Alliance

Memorandum of Understanding

Adopted:

NAME

Heartland Coalfield Alliance

MISSION

The Heartland Coalfield Alliance (HCA) works to reduce impacts from dirty coal mining, coal burning and coal waste disposal while promoting cleaner, more sustainable and affordable energy solutions for the Illinois Coal Basin. Our broad-based Alliance has come together to develop the ideas, share the resources, build public understanding and garner political support necessary to advance solutions that can help communities in the heartland make a just transition from the current coal economy to a clean and sustainable energy economy. The Alliance has generally defined the “heartland” as the Illinois Coal Basin, including parts of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe the following principles should shape the Illinois Coal Basin’s energy policies:

- Reduction of state subsidies to the coal industry.
- Implementation of pollution prevention and advanced treatment technologies to reduce the impacts of coal mining, coal processing, coal burning and waste disposal on clean air, water, land and public health.
- Development of cleaner, renewable energy in order to increase their share of our overall energy mix.
- Creation of new jobs and opportunities for those living and working in the Heartland, including a just transition for coal producing communities and workers.
- Enabling local residents and businesses to take advantage of energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions.

ALLIANCE STRATEGY

A broad-based alliance is needed to win sustainable energy policies that can produce significant benefits for the Heartland. This alliance aims to bring together organizations from diverse sectors of the state. However, business support will be decided on a case by case basis. Political parties only can engage with the Alliance as a "supporter" and, the Alliance can not take resources from any political party.

As an Alliance, we will identify a focused set of meaningful policies, consistent with our mission and guiding principles and will push a specific, proactive agenda that can be supported by a broad set of organizations. Consequently, we may not take a position on all proposed energy projects. However, we acknowledge that many of our organizations will likely work on issues separately from the Alliance.

In order to prevent un-resourced campaigns within the Alliance, at least four member organizations need to commit to taking a leadership role in a campaign before it becomes an official campaign of the Alliance. Similarly, in order for a specific event to be considered an Alliance event, there need to be at least four member organizations committed to taking a leadership role in making the event a success.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ALLIANCE

Supporters

Supporters are *individuals* who sign-on to the mission and principles. Supporters are included on email listservs and are welcome to attend/participate in Alliance meetings. As individuals, however, they do not have a vote on Alliance matters unless they are representing a member organization.

Members

Members of the Alliance are *organizations* that sign-on to the mission and principles and the memorandum of understanding, which outlines roles, responsibilities, privileges and decision-making processes. Member groups will each designate a point person to be the primary contact person with the Alliance. Member organizations, through these contact people, are included on email listservs and may participate in all Alliance meetings. (If the contact person changes or is unavailable, the organization can designate someone else.) An organization can designate more than one contact person, but each group gets only one vote.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee is a smaller set of member groups in the Alliance who are willing to commit a higher level of staff or leadership time to advancing the work of the Alliance. Their responsibilities include helping to plan meeting agendas, making recommendations to the full Alliance, and taking responsibility for specific pieces of the Alliance's work plan. Participants also may lead HCA committees and represent the Alliance as needed and appropriate. A member group may choose to serve on the coordinating committee by notifying the convener at any time.

The coordinating committee's primary function will be to a) develop proposals for consideration by the full group and b) actively recruit organizations and individuals to participate in the Alliance. Later on, the coordinating committee may make certain time-sensitive strategy decisions, but only within the parameters established by the larger Alliance.

Because the coordinating committee will play an essential role, a sincere effort will be made to ensure it includes a good cross-section of member organizations, including groups representing labor, environment, anti-poverty organizations, community development, and more.

Some groups or individuals on the coordinating committee will have more or less time, resources, and capacity than others. At a minimum, organizations that volunteer to serve on the coordinating committee should strive to participate in calls and meetings. Beyond that, each organization will set its own limits. If a group signs up for the coordinating committee but is consistently unable to participate, the group may be asked by the coordinating committee, based on majority vote, to step aside from that role.

Organizations may designate one or more individuals to serve on the coordinating committee. However, each organization gets one vote when decisions are made.

Convener

The Convener is an organization who is asked by the HCA to provide basic administrative support and coordination needed for the Alliance to function. Responsibilities include scheduling, planning and facilitating meetings; ensuring good communication with the broader HCA; and maintaining/updating an Alliance work plan. The convening organization has a coordinating role, not a public leadership role. The effectiveness of the convener will be evaluated at least once a year. The coordinating committee may choose to designate a different convener or co-convener at any time after evaluating performance by the convener or co-convener (i.e., following through with responsibilities in the manner described herein), but a 2/3 majority vote must be obtained to ask a convener or co-convener to step down.

DECISION-MAKING

By the Full Alliance

The full Alliance will meet at least four times a year by conference call and/or face-to-face. Recommendations for decisions that require a meeting of the full Alliance will be brought forward by the coordinating committee for consideration and a vote. They include:

- Modifications to the mission and guiding principles.
- Setting policy goals.
- Campaigns, or key strategies for achieving campaigns.
- Modifications to either the Alliance structure and/or decision-making processes.
- Substantial compromises/changes to priority legislation.

Each member organization in the Alliance has one vote.

HCA meetings should be announced to all members with reasonable advanced notice and meeting notes should be made available to all members. A quorum isn't required at Alliance meetings, but voting rights are exercised when physically present (versus email).

As a broad-based Alliance, we acknowledge that there may be a number of policy areas where disagreements are possible, and even likely. We will strive to operate by consensus or general agreement, to the extent possible (by those physically present or on the phone), in order to respect one another's contributions, and to learn from each other as we go forward.

In order to reach consensus, there should be general agreement from the group to move forward on an issue. If there are slight reservations by individuals on a proposal, but general agreement by the group that it is the best option, it would be considered consensus. If there are strong feelings in the group against a proposal, and there is not general agreement of the group, it would not be considered consensus. If consensus is not reached, and there is a time-sensitive need to make a decision, the decision will follow the majority vote of those present.

Every effort will be made in advance of the decision-making meeting to contact all active Alliance members about the meeting to ensure full participation. In addition, minutes from previous meetings will be made available at least 48 hours in advance to inform the conversation.

By the Coordinating Committee

The coordinating committee also will meet as needed by conference call or in person. Coordinating committee meetings may be held to

- Plan HCA meetings.
- Develop recommendations for the full Alliance.
- Develop ways to implement decisions and strategies outlined by the full Alliance.
- Discuss ways to respond to changing events.
- Make time-sensitive strategy decisions within parameters established by the full Alliance.

Each organization on the coordinating committee has one vote.

Coordinating committee meetings should be announced to all committee members with reasonable advanced notice. Meeting notes should be made available to all HCA members.

A quorum isn't required at coordinating committee meetings – decisions can be made by those who participate following the process described above for the full Alliance, as long as the meeting was announced with reasonable notice (two weeks or more).

By the Convener

The convener(s) may decide when to schedule meetings of the HCA and the coordinating committee. The convener must schedule a meeting within two weeks time if it is requested by at least four member organizations of the Alliance.

COMMUNICATIONS

**See Communications Matrix*

Coordination within the Alliance - Planned quarterly face-to-face meetings of the Alliance, with reports and updates provided. Overall strategies and tactics also will be discussed and agreed upon for implementation over the next three months. Minutes and a concise list of actions and individual responsibilities will be distributed on the Google listserv and posted on the HCA wiki by notetakers.

Day-to-Day Coordination within Working Groups - On-going coordination of working groups between Alliance meetings will be accomplished through regularly-scheduled conference calls and face-to-face meetings when determined necessary. Minutes and a concise list of actions and individual responsibilities will be distributed on the Google listserv and posted on the HCA wiki by notetakers.

Communicating the “Big Picture” of Coal - A public information and advocacy campaign will be used to spread the work and organize support for our work. A primary tool will be the Roadshow, presented in public venues throughout the state. Articles and topical discussions will be posted on the HCA website and Facebook pages by EJC and PRN*. Requests for posting should be sent to EJC and PRN in an email with the word POST in the subject line. Protocols for distributing the Roadshow will be developed and communicated to the larger group by the working group.

Data on Selected Mine Sites - Locations, photos and mine descriptions will be posted on the website as a public information tool. More proprietary information will be posted on the HCA

wiki. Requests for posting should be sent to EJC and PRN in an email with the word POST in the subject line.

Info on Coal Waste Disposal Sites - Locations, photos and descriptions will be posted on the website as a public information tool. More proprietary information will be posted on the HCA wiki. Requests for posting should be sent to EJC and PRN in an email with the word POST in the subject line.

Information on Permit, Hearings and Agency Actions - Notifications and updates on pending permits, pertinent hearings, and public involvement opportunities will be posted on the HCA website and Facebook Page, then shared by HCA team members on their Facebook network. As information becomes available, members of HCA can forward details to EJC and PRN for posting using POST in the subject line of their email. Meeting details should be placed by HCA members on the wiki calendar. As appropriate, this information also will be distributed via an e-newsletter format by the communications working group.

Announcements - Information on significant announcements relative to the HCA mission will be disseminated via the website, Facebook and the E-newsletter format. Announcements should be sent to EJC and PRN's attention for posting using POST in the subject line. Day-to-day updates and miscellaneous information shared among HCA members should be distributed directly via the listserv.

Internal Documents & References -These materials are comprised of documents, letters, memos and references that are not intended for viewing by the public, but may be useful for the work of HCA members. They may be uploaded directly to the appropriate folders on the HCA wiki and a notice provided to HCA members via the wiki using the "share this page" function and listserv.

Public References and Tools - These materials will consist of articles, reports, guidance, fact sheets, etc. that may be of use to the public in their educational and organizing efforts. Appropriate materials may be posted on the HCA website and their availability highlighted through the e-newsletter. Candidate materials should be forwarded to EJC and PRN via email with POST in the subject line.

Campaign Calls to Action - Public calls for advocacy and action will be posted on the HCA website and Facebook pages, included in a web post and distributed via e-newsletter. Campaign calls to action should be clearly written and include all pertinent information along with specific asks and directions for the public. As appropriate, scheduling information should be posted on the wiki calendar. Email information to EJC and PRN using the words CALL to ACTION in the subject line.

Media - The HCA media team will coordinate media on behalf of the Alliance as a whole, with input and assistance for all members as necessary for the topic and locale. Specific tools will include op-eds, letters to the editor, feature stories, radio and TV interviews, press conferences, etc. This will not preclude or be a substitute for media outreach and publicity carried out by and for participating HCA organizations.

Listserv / Wiki - The communications team is responsible for maintaining the listserv. The team will create separate lists for each working team to facilitate communications without adding traffic to the larger list. Requests for adding people to the wiki or to specific lists should be sent to EJC and PRN with LISTSERV in the subject line.

Database - The communications team is responsible for maintaining data that will be used in the campaign to publicize events and distribute key information via E-mail using an email newsletter software program. Contact information collected via coalfield tours, postcards, petitions, sign-in sheets, canvassing, etc. will be added to a Google Doc spreadsheet. Data collected by HCA team members should be sent to EJC and PRN via email using DATABASE in the subject line.

*EJC = Pam Richart, prichart@ecojusticecollaborative.org

*PRN = Brian Perbix, bperbix@prairierivers.org

DATA MANAGEMENT

All of the data collected through Heartland Coalfield Alliance (HCA) activities will be entered into a main database on the wiki, regardless of who collected the information.

The main data list will be used for all Alliance announcements and event recruitment. Therefore, when the Alliance agrees that an upcoming event will be an ALLIANCE event (as opposed to an event put on by one organization) the Alliance will send out emails, as appropriate, to the entire database list. Emails to all those entered into this database will be limited to once every two weeks in order to prevent email exhaustion. Emails will link to the Alliance calendar on the website.

Data can be identified as collected by a specific group (e.g. Prairie Rivers Network, Faith in Place, Eco-Justice Collaborative, Sierra Club, etc.) in a column designated for this purpose. This will allow for that data to be separated out when the group wishes to reach out to the names they collected.

Fields that indicate the individual's area of continued interest (e.g. coal ash, mining law reform, subsidies, coal tours, etc). also will be checked as appropriate so they can be sorted for future communication by participating HCA organizations, such as action alerts. Such emails will be coordinated among the participating organizations to prevent duplication and email exhaustion that might occur if participating HCA organizations (e.g. Prairie Rivers Network, Faith in Place, Eco-Justice Collaborative, Sierra Club, etc.).

COMMITTEES

There are many roles that need to be filled if the mission of the Heartland Coalfield Alliance is to be fulfilled. When determined necessary, committees or task forces may be created to carry out the work of the Alliance. The establishment of such committees or task forces will require a majority vote of approval by those members present at a meeting. All task forces and committees must elect a chair and recording secretary, and follow the decision-making process outlined for the Alliance Building and Communications Committees below.

None of the leadership roles described herein constitutes a higher authority. Each role is as important as the other, although some will require a larger time commitment. As long as each role is being filled and expectations are being met, our Alliance should be successful.

Alliance Building Committee

As a subcommittee of the Heartland Coalfield Alliance, the Alliance Building Committee reports directly to and takes direction from voting members. This committee is primarily responsible for:

1. Recruiting additional members and supporters to help strengthen the work of HCA.

2. Reviewing and approving supporter or member applications based on the mission and guiding principles created for Heartland Coalfield Alliance. Where there are questions regarding compatibility, a representative from the organization will be asked to a regularly-scheduled HCA meeting for an interview and a vote shall be taken that same day according to the decision-making process described in this memorandum for voting members. The organizational representative shall be notified of the outcome of this vote not more than two days after the vote is taken, explaining the basis for the decision made by the Alliance regarding membership.
3. Engaging existing members to be more involved with activities, programs and campaigns of the alliance. The Alliance Building Committee will work to match the resources and skills of each Alliance organization with the on-going needs of the current campaign.

The Alliance Building Committee will consist of three or more people and have a chairperson who will be responsible for convening meetings, setting agendas and monitoring the work of the committee. This committee will strive to work by consensus, but make decisions by majority vote when consensus cannot be achieved.

Communications Committee

As a subcommittee of the Heartland Coalfield Alliance, the Communications Committee reports directly to and takes direction from voting members. This committee is primarily responsible for:

1. Support, maintain and improve upon communication tools used for both internal and external communication with the Heartland Coalfield Alliance including but not limited to the website, wiki, listserv, facebook page, database.
2. Support, maintain and improve upon communication tools used as part of the public information and advocacy campaign used to spread and organize support for HCA's work including but not limited to the presentations, flyers, website, facebook page, pictures.
3. Coordinate media on behalf of the Alliance, as a whole, with input and assistance for all members as necessary for the topic and locale. Tools used include, but are not limited to op-eds, letters to the editor, feature stories, radio and TV interviews, press conferences, etc.

The Communications Committee will consist of three or more people and have a chairperson who would be responsible for convening meetings, setting agendas and monitoring the work of the committee. This committee will strive to work by consensus, but make decisions by majority vote when consensus cannot be achieved.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Memorandum of Understanding

The Coordinating Committee will review the Memorandum of Understanding annually to determine any updates that are needed. Recommended updates will be prepared and forwarded to member organizations at a regularly-scheduled meeting for action. The Alliance will strive to achieve consensus on proposed amendments, but will act by majority vote if consensus cannot be achieved.

Campaigns

Member organizations also shall review campaigns on an annual basis. Campaigns may be suspended for the following reasons:

1. The campaign is not effective or relevant to the work of the Alliance.
2. There are fewer than four organizations actively working on the campaign.
3. It is determined that a campaign is no longer consistent with the mission or guiding principles of the Alliance.

Member organizations will strive to make decisions regarding the suspension of a campaign by consensus, but will act by majority vote if consensus cannot be achieved.